

the chronicle

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BE LENDING A
HELPING HAND**
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Brownhills market now gone for good

Brownhills Market has been scrapped just over six months after its much-trumpeted return.

LSD Promotions has pulled the plug on the Silver Street site after business plunged.

The market last Saturday was the final one, with the decision to axe it coming less than six weeks after bosses closed the Thursday event.

There were 80 stalls following its initial two-day-a-week relaunch but just five traders were present last weekend.

Talks with Walsall Council over finding a new location failed, prompting the decision.

LSD promotions director Dermot McGillicuddy said: "We are disappointed as we were really hopeful that we could make a go of it."

"We did everything that was possible to encourage traders to come. But the numbers went down and the shoppers didn't come out. If it had carried on this Saturday there would have been just two traders."

The market operators, who run the town's successful Bescot Sunday event, were brought in by the council last November to stage Brownhills on Thursdays and Saturdays.

It is the latest blow to the market which dates back more than 40 years. In June 2009 it closed after then landlords Spook Erections failed to agree a new contract. Weeks later it was revived by council bosses but collapsed again in 2010.

Regeneration chief councillor Adrian Andrew admitted there were no immediate plans for a market to return to Brownhills. But plans to create a public square which could hold markets near the High Street, as part of the Tesco expansion, were still on-going. But this is unlikely to be completed until 2013.

Councillor Andrew said: "We have tried absolutely everything to make Brownhills Market a success bar paying customers to come here."

Travellers are moved off land

A dozen travellers' caravans which camped on Pelsall Common have been moved on by police and council officers.

The convoy was forced off the protected village common after a stay of less than 24 hours.

Two cardboard boxes and two bin bags filled with rubbish were left behind. Pelsall councillor Garry Perry said: "They were in such a visible location, right in the centre of the village on protected land. It did cause quite a stir."

"Hopefully that's the end of it now. I would ask people to remain vigilant though and report anything else they may see."

Caravans began arriving at the site at around 10.30pm on Wednesday. There were seven mobile homes by midnight and 12 by the morning.

They were the latest arrival of travellers in Walsall, with caravans also in Rough Wood Country Park in Willenhall and Chester Road North, Brownhills.

Council bosses are now working on preventative measures such as bollards to crack down on the problem in hotspot areas.

Fruit machines targeted

Raiders targeted fruit machines in the George Stephenson pub, Beechdale, Walsall after a break-in. Three youths, two aged 16 and a 15-year-old, were arrested and bailed by police soon afterwards.

Manor Hospital is due to charge badge holders

DISABLED SET TO PAY FOR PARKING

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Disabled drivers will be charged for parking at Walsall Manor Hospital in a shake-up that will see a new half-hour fee introduced for short-stay visitors.

Hospital bosses are set to introduce a new parking charge of £1 for 30 minutes, after complaints from visitors forced to pay a flat £2 fee for a short stay.

But blue badge holders hit out after they were told that they will have to pay hospital parking charges for the first time.

Health campaigner Pete Smith has urged the hospital to rethink its stance.

"It is bad enough charging any outpatient or hospital visitor for parking on the hospital car parks," said Mr Smith, a former councillor for Blakenall.

"But to introduce new charges for disabled outpatients and visitors with blue badges is unacceptable."

Priority

Hospital bosses have said the new car parks had more priority spaces for blue badge holders as well as new parent-and-child spaces.

Lincoln Dawkin, interim commercial director at Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust, said: "Providing more of these dedicated spaces has resulted in the trust taking the difficult decision that disabled blue badge holders now have to pay the normal car parking rates."

But he added while existing car parking rates will stay the same, a new rate for drivers staying 30 minutes or less was to be introduced.

"Following patient and visitor feedback, the trust has recently decided to include a new car parking rate of £1 for 30 minutes; this new rate will come into effect in approximately one month's time," said Mr Dawkin.

The existing car parking rates at Walsall Manor Hospital remain as £2 for the first hour and £1 for every hour after that up to a maximum of £6. Weekly concessionary passes are also available if you visit the hospital on a regular basis."

The Manor's new car parks, off Plick Road and Wilbraham Road, have 450 spaces combined.

Drivers - page 2

Musical highlight for crowds

A performance by a ukelele group, a flyover from an aircraft which fought in the Second World War and belly dancing displays were among the highlights at Aldridge's 17th annual fair.

Thousands of residents flocked to Anchor Meadow, off Middlemore Lane, Aldridge, for the yearly extravaganza on Saturday organised by Aldridge Lions.

The ukelele music group from Leighwood and Aldridge schools showed off their skills. Onlookers were also treated to the sight of a Dakota DC3 plane.

Rain failed to dampen the spirits of the crowd.

The fair was opened by Mayor of Walsall Garry Perry.

Performers included the Panthers Judo Club, the Cannock Chase drum corps, and the Kelgani belly dance troupe while the Walsall Royal Marine Cadets dazzled visitors with their drill display.

A cheque for £600 went to Marie Curie Trust, while two £300 cheques were given to Walsall Arthritis Care and Walsall Arthritis Support and a £100 cheque went to the mayor's charity.



Jack Hale and Matthew Monagan with their schools' ukelele music group

Walsall 'has one of worst high streets'

Walsall town centre has been "named and shamed" as one of the worst high streets in the country. It is among the quarter of UK high streets falling as the gap grows between the best and worst town centres.

Empty shops triggered a downward spiral in 83 out of 365 towns, says a survey by property consultants Colliers International.

Walsall is on the list along with Bootle, Merseyside, Dunstable and Bedfordshire.

Its centre has about 80 shops and businesses empty, with big names such as Topshop leaving the Park Street shopping area.

The Hogshead pub, Zavvi music store, and Chicago Rock Cafe have also closed in Park Street, Leicester Street and Lichfield Street.

The centre has the 24th highest vacancy rate in the country at 26 per cent and the level of empty shops and units is growing faster than the national average.

Elsewhere, another 42 retail centres surveyed today were deemed to be degenerating. These included Grimsby, Lincolnshire; Dartford, Kent; and Walworth Road, London. More than a third are said to be stable.

The high street is one of the most evident victims of a consumer spending squeeze triggered by high inflation and muted wage growth, and fears over economic recovery.

The survey is to be published this week.

Death crash rider is named

A motorcyclist who died after being in a crash with a lorry in Darlaston has been named as Jeff Picken. The married 43-year-old died following the collision in Heath Road, Darlaston. He was originally from Wednesbury.

Floral tributes to the former Wood Green High School pupil have been left at the scene. Mr Picken, a father and uncle and a welder by trade, was pronounced dead at Walsall Manor Hospital following the crash at 6.50am on June 16.

The collision happened at the junction of Heath Road and Walsall Road, just off the mini-roundabout near to the Total petrol station.

Mr Picken's Suzuki collided with a Scania lorry belonging to European Metal Recycling, which has a base in Bentley Road South, Darlaston. Walsall Council is assessing whether safety measures need to be brought in at the scene.

Motorcyclist - page 14

MP calling for nominations for carrying Olympic torch

A Walsall MP is calling on her constituents to nominate people to become a torchbearer during the 2012 Olympic torch relay.

Valerie Vaz wants people to nominate someone who has made a real difference to their community. The 70-day relay, which starts on May 18, next year, will see the torch carried hundreds of miles by 8,000 torchbearers. The route will bring the torch within a one-hour journey of 95 per cent of the UK population.

Nominations can be made via www.lloydstsb.com/carrytheflame by September 12, 2011. They can also be made at www.london2012.com/games/olympic-torch-relay/ until 29 June 2011.

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Travellers camp on town park

Travellers have set up camp on a Willenhall country park – the latest convoy of caravans to have settled in Walsall within weeks. Five caravans are also on land in Brownhills.

Around a dozen caravans have arrived on land at Rough Wood Country Park, off Bentley Lane, in Short Heath, after managing to get access to the site several days ago.

Complaints from residents have now been lodged with Walsall Council calling for the camp to be moved from the land and for the council to make sure it does not move from site to site. Willenhall councillor Ian Shires said he believed the latest convoy of caravans had come from land in Leamore, Bloxwich.

"The Friends group have done a really good job in tidying up the area and the travellers have now moved on there," he said.

"There is going to be rubbish left behind and all this costs a lot of money after to clear up. This is a country park that people feel very protective of."

Escorted

"If they are being evicted off a particular site they should be escorted off the borough. They should not just move from the site and go to another."

Travellers are also on land opposite The Hussey Arms pub, Chester Road North, Brownhills, just days after a group was moved on from Hollands Park.

Wooden bollards have now been installed to stop travellers gaining access to the park.

Walsall Council bosses said an eviction notice had now been served to clear the travellers from Rough Wood.

Lorraine Boothman, interim trading standards manager at Walsall Council, said: "We fully understand the concerns of people living near Rough Wood Country Park regarding the unexpected influx of vehicles at this site."

"Council officers served an eviction notice and we are now liaising with the police to clear the land."

"If council owned land is particularly vulnerable to unauthorised access, the council will make an assessment to see if preventative measures can be put in place to restrict access," she added.

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Calls on memorial

Researchers appealing for information over a memorial dedicated to pupils of a Bloxwich school who served in the First World War have so far attracted 20 calls from relatives.

The stone tablet has been returned to its original home at Elmore Green Primary after a 50 year absence. It had been moved to TP Riley Community School which was demolished in 2002, then placed in storage for safe

keeping. Local historians Barry Crutchley and Ken Wayman have appealed for surviving relatives of the 67 men listed to come forward with more information which can be used in a new book. Plans are also being made for dedication ceremony at Elmore Green Primary, Elmore Green Road. Call 01922 683668 or 01922 691515 with information on any more names.

Parking charges bid for disabled drivers

Disabled drivers could soon be charged for using council car parks in Walsall town centre. The borough council is considering changing the rules.

It would also help swell council coffers at a time when it needs to save £70 million over three years – and is losing much-needed parking revenue to the new £65m Tesco. If the plan becomes a reality, blue badge holders will have to pay for spaces in all off-street, council-run car parks in the town centre.

£30,000 is lost over Christmas

Free Christmas parking lost Walsall Council more than £30,000 in revenue and failed to significantly boost visitor numbers, new figures claim.

The festive parking incentive has been used across council-owned car parks in a bid to encourage more visitors to the town centre.

But it has been revealed by highways chiefs it failed to attract large numbers of extra shoppers last year.

It has placed doubts over the long-term future of the scheme as the authority looks to claw back millions.

Parking fees were suspended on more than a dozen car parks in the heart of the borough from December 20 until January 3 last year. A review of parking has been carried out within Walsall town centre in a bid to fill spaces.

A report from the working group said there was a risk of reducing costs on car parks as usage may not increase and income could fall.

It states: "Free parking offered during Christmas 2010 was referred to as an example as occupancy rates during this period did not differ greatly from the previous year despite free parking being offered. Revenue of circa £30,000 was lost as a result."

However, councillor Dennis Anson, a member of the working group, said they believe the offer should continue. "If no-one comes into the town we lose a lot more," he said.

Plant sale to raise cash

A Walsall woman will open her garden for a fundraising plant sale this weekend. Sue Hampton of 17 Fallowfield Road, Orchard Hills hopes to raise £2,400 for Midlands Air Ambulance and Walsall Hospice between 10am and 4pm on Saturday and Sunday.

More motorists caught

Another 25 drivers have been caught flouting rules of the road in Walsall town centre, as a new police blitz continues. Officers have lain in wait to catch motorists making illegal right turns from Hatherton Road into Lichfield Street. In the latest crackdown, the fourth of its kind in as many weeks, 25 drivers got fixed penalty fines for illegal right turns. A total of 218 were caught

doing illegal turns and using bus lanes. Officers again warned they will continue action days to drive home the message. In the latest three-hour operation last week, all drivers caught were also breathalysed as part of an ongoing summer drink drive campaign. All drivers tested for alcohol were negative. Insp Simon Rowbotham said: "There have also been several near collisions."

Fines for underage pub sales

Staff at two pubs were fined for selling alcohol to underage drinkers as part of a fresh crackdown aimed at reducing booze-fuelled trouble across Walsall.

A joint police and Walsall Council operation has been launched to stop the illegal sale of alcohol which can lead to anti-social behaviour.

Underage test purchase volunteers were used to visit licensed premises with two pubs, the Bridge Tavern, in Short Heath, Willenhall, and The Crown in King Edward Street, Darlaston, caught making underage sales. Both workers who made the sales were given fixed penalty notices for £80 for the selling alcohol to under 18s.

Officers have vowed to carry on regular checks to make it stop being sold to those underage. Police say there is often a link between booze and anti-social behaviour.

They will be ensuring all pubs across the borough stick to the licensing law as part of the crackdown.

Sgt Bren O'Hare, from Walsall borough licensing team, said: "There is strong evidence to show that alcohol and anti-social behaviour are linked."

Mayor to give pupils shilling

The Mayor and mayoress of Walsall will attend a Civic Sunday service at the town's St Matthew's Church this weekend.

The service, on June 26, will be followed by the traditional bun and shilling presentation to local children.

The Mayor, Councillor Garry Perry will attend the church in St Matthew's Close, Church Hill, at 10.30am, along with Mayoress June Perry. Guests will include fellow mayors and civic dignitaries from other local authorities.

After the service Councillor Perry will greet youngsters from Blue Coat Schools at Walsall Town Hall to present them with a silver coin and a bun. The bun and shilling tradition can be traced back to London in 1553 when youngsters from Christ's Hospital School – the predecessor of Blue Coat schools across the country – were entertained by the mayor.

Sleeping position 'risk to the unborn'

Women who sleep on their right side or back during late pregnancy could be at increased risk of stillbirth, research suggests.

Experts found a link between sleeping position and the chance of late stillbirth – 28 weeks or over – in a study of more than 450 women.

The overall risk of late stillbirth was small – just three per 1,000 births – but researchers said the findings needed "urgent confirmation" in other studies.

Some 155 women who had a late stillbirth were questioned about their lifestyles, and compared with 310 women who went on to have healthy pregnancies.

A bus-tin' day to be a dad



National Express worker Ken Billingham, centre, celebrates Father's Day in advance with fellow workers – son Andrew, aged 17, and daughter Rachael, 20

Father's Day is just the ticket for one family who are all carving out a career on the buses.

Going to work is a real family affair for Ken Billingham, whose son and daughter have both followed in his footsteps to work for National Express West Midlands.

Son Andrew and daughter Rachael met at the Walsall depot to wish their father a very happy Father's Day.

Ken, aged 47, a recruitment officer, of Parkes Street, Brierley Hill, has

worked for National Express for 26 years after following his father Samuel who was a bus driver for more than 30 years.

Both Rachael, aged 20, and Andrew, 17, did work experience alongside their father in the Walsall depot in Carl Street.

Rachael now works as a purchase ledger clerk at the company's Bordesley Green base while Andrew is an apprentice engineer at the Walsall depot.

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Meetings on crime concerns

Residents in a Walsall neighbourhood can attend a new twice-monthly police surgery to discuss crime matters.

The surgery will take place every other Friday at Milton Street Community Centre, in Palfrey, with the next one scheduled for this Friday June 24.

The surgery has been set up by local police community support officer for Palfrey Tim Little-

hales as a way of encouraging residents to influence policing priorities.

Peso Littlehailes said: "This is a chance for local people to come and meet their neighbourhood policing team on a one-to-one basis and discuss any concerns they may have."

"Although people are welcome to report crime, if they have other concerns we can signpost them to

our partner agencies. We already have a Neighbourhood Watch set up in Palfrey that meets regularly, but this surgery will be held in the daytime for people who may struggle to come in the evening. "Anyone who would like to attend should go to the community centre between 11-1pm on June 24 and then every other Friday after that. For more information call 0345 113 5000.

Improving education

Watchdogs at Walsall council have earmarked six areas to try and improve children's education and well-being.

Walsall Council's children's and young people scrutiny and performance panel agreed their work programme for the year.

The panel is chaired by Councillor Barbara Cassidy, who said: "This committee exists solely to promote the education and well-being of all chil-

dren in the borough." Six main themes the panel will focus on are education policy and school performance; performance of Walsall's education contract with private provider Serco; monitoring the closure of Sneyd School; students' educational achievements; monitoring outcomes set out in the children and young people's plan and monitoring services to children with disabilities. The panel next meets on July 19 at 6pm.

Possession of cocaine is admitted

A police raid at a Walsall home uncovered cocaine that could have been resold for more than £1,000, a court heard.

Officers raided David Hill's address in Fullbrook Road, Delves on March 25. Walsall Magistrates Court heard that when they searched the property they found 27.9g of rock cocaine.

The 31-year-old, who admitted possessing the class A drug with intent to supply, also pleaded guilty to possessing amphetamine and cannabis after a small quantity was found.

Mrs Maggie Meakin, prosecuting, said Hill's partner and two young children had been at the address while police searched their home. He was handcuffed after he acted aggressively, she said.

Mrs Meakin said the officers also found benzocaine and boric acid, described as "cutting agents" to mix with cocaine.

The estimated street value of the Class A drug was £500-£600 but police said it could have been resold in 28 deals - potentially bringing in a sum of more than £1,000.

Hill was arrested and tested positive for cocaine during a drugs test.

The case was committed to Wolverhampton Crown Court for sentence on July 19. Hill was given unconditional bail.

Delivery firm is recruiting 300

Recruitment is now under way for 300 jobs being created at a former delivery depot in Willenhall, as the company moving in has taken over another large building in the town.

Delivery firm Yodel is opening up the former City Link base, just off the Black Country Route. The new revamped depot will open in a phased programme, with the first workers appointed and getting to work as early as next month. It is hoped all staff will have moved in and the site will be fully open by the end of August.

New signs have now gone up and workers are revamping the 150,000 sq ft depot in Downs Road, Willenhall.

The company is also taking over the former City Link offices in Midland Road, on the Willenhall and Darlaston border.

Yodel, the new name for Home Delivery Network, has also taken over an empty industrial building off Armstrong Way, just a stone's throw from the new depot. This will be used as a yard for vehicles.

A spokeswoman for Yodel said: "People will have noticed a lot of activity going on at the site at the moment and there will be a lot more to come."

"We will be doing a phased opening and recruitment is now well under way. We are looking for the site to be fully functional by the end of August."

Silver award to college

The marketing department at Walsall College has landed an award at a national ceremony. College staff travelled to Leeds to attend the Heist Awards for Education Marketing and won a silver award in the Best Further Education Prospectus category. The annual awards recognise outstanding examples of marketing campaigns in the HE and FE sector. Walsall College's young peoples' course guide for last year also won a highly commended award in Best Sixth Form/College Prospectus category.

Team up for band battle

A Walsall school has teamed up with a music charity for a battle of the bands-style competition. The Year 10 music class at Frank F Harrison Engineering College is working with the Blastbeat project. All of the bands participating will have a chance at going on to perform at the 02 Arena and other venues.

4,000 carry on crimes

More than 4,000 criminals in the West Midlands and Staffordshire reoffended last year, claim new figures.

Seven per cent of 58,032 convicted offenders committed a new crime, or crimes, in 2010 in the two regions.

The figures have been revealed by Staffordshire and West Midlands Probation Trust and bosses are pleased, claiming reoffending rates were slightly below those expected by the Government.

But a former police chief superintendent said the statistics were "a play on figures".

There were 360 reoffenders in Sandwell, 300 in both Wolverhampton and Walsall, and 250 in Dudley.

Reoffending rates were lowest in Staffordshire, with just over six per cent of its convicted population of 7,643 returning to criminal activity, and highest in Walsall.

Almost nine per cent of 3,624 criminals in the borough extended their records.

Age gap over ops

Older women are less likely to have breast cancer surgery than younger, alarming research carried out in the West Midlands claims.

Experts are unsure of the reasons, although they say the findings cannot solely be explained by older women also having other illnesses.

They are conducting more research into whether patients choose not to have surgery or whether other factors - such as age discrimination in the NHS - play a role. Researchers examined the records of more than 23,000 women with breast cancer diagnosed in the region.

Manor told to make improvements to care

The new Walsall Manor Hospital has been ordered to make improvements after it emerged passers-by were able to see a naked pensioner being given treatment.

Inspectors found some elderly patients at risk of dehydration because they were not being offered help to drink.



Chief executive Richard Kirby

Watchdogs also raised concerns over the privacy of patients at Walsall Manor Hospital.

Fears were raised over the well-being of pensioners from the Care Quality Commission, which said they were not always receiving the fluids they needed.

Overall, the commission ruled essential standards were being met but a few lapses meant improvements needed to be made.

Inspectors visited the hospital on April 13 to see how well elderly patients were being looked after.

They found no-one was offered the chance to wash their hands before meal times and they were not always helped with their drinks.

The report reads: "Patients were not always given the assistance they needed to have a drink. We saw

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several instances where fluids were left that had not been taken.

"We also saw some fluid charts were inaccurately completed to reflect the amount of fluids that had been taken."

"For example, we saw drinks left in a beaker and whilst this was in reach of the patient they made no attempt to drink it. The patient was confused as to place and time."

The Care Quality Commission concluded that some patients were at risk of dehydration.

The report added: "During the visit, we saw no-one was offered the opportunity to wash their hands before having a meal."

Richard Kirby, chief executive, said the hospital was now developing an action plan.

The official report published on June 16 reads: "We saw a patient exposed whilst the nurses were giving care. The patient was visible by anyone in the corridor in front of the bay and there was a male talking to someone nearby."

Exposed

"The nurse did try to draw the curtains but they did not close properly and the patient remained exposed and was not covered in a sheet or blanket."

Inspectors found there were a number of beds that could not be completely closed off due to missing curtain hooks.

They also viewed staff talking too loudly about a patient's condition, boards displaying medical information on view to all and staff "talking across patients and not to them".

The report continued: "There were occasions when some staff seemed over familiar with patients and did not use their name, but referred to the patient as 'good girl'."

However, inspectors said they had observed overall good practice when it came to patients' privacy and dignity, saying people were treated with respect and their needs were met.

The food service was praised, with no one complaining about meals and staff sitting to help feed patients.

Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust now has 28 days to present a list of improvements to the commission.

Richard Kirby, chief executive, said: "The report did suggest that we could make some minor improvements and we are currently developing an action plan to make sure that our services are even stronger in the future."

Jessica's a gem for charity



Miss Teen Walsall Jessica Watts prepares to lend support to good causes

Miss Teen Walsall Jessica Watts is to lend a hand to promote good causes and young people's projects in the town. The fashion mad teenager who hopes to become a model is currently sitting her GCSEs at Q3 Academy in Great Barr, where she is a pupil.

In addition to her school work and beauty contest duties she will lend support to the civic charities chosen by Mayor of Walsall Councillor Garry Perry, by attending events.

Jessica, of Turnberry Estate, Bloxwich, also celebrated her 16th birthday at the weekend. "I've been to

the Council House to meet the mayor and I was really chuffed about that," she said. "All his charities are linked to young people and I'm happy to lend support to them and to other good causes."

She will head to the national finals of the Miss Teen Great Britain contest in Blackpool in September with mother Carol, aged 50, and father Keith 52 and her siblings.

The mayor said: "She's a lovely person and it's great to have someone so young on board who wants to get involved in the community," he said.

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New plea over fork burglar

Police in Walsall have made a fresh appeal for information about a burglary at the house of 76-year-old woman.

The attack happened at around 10am on June 6 at a house in Pheasey. The victim heard a noise in her back garden and as she opened the door to see what was going on she was confronted by a man.

He had used a garden fork to force his way through an outer back door and then forced the pensioner to walk around her home pointing out valuable items.

He got away with cash and a bank card.

The burglar was white, 5ft 4in-5ft 9in tall, unshaven, with a "dirty-looking" complexion and local accent. He was wearing a green khaki padded coat and gardening gloves.

Det Con Andy Bellingham, from Walsall CID, said: "This was a disgusting attack on an elderly and vulnerable lady."

"The offender used unnecessary force to hold her down and march her around the house in order to steal cash, resulting in her suffering bruising and shock."

"The incident happened in broad daylight and we are hoping there are people in the local area who may have seen the offender either before or after the burglary, who will come forward and give us information."

Anyone with information can contact police on 0345 113 5000.

Student skills to go on show

Two Walsall College students are honing their skills ahead of a big competition later this month.

The college's Green Lane campus will host three events in the Skill M&E competition, the Midlands regional heat for plumbers and electricians.

During the two-day contest, Walsall College will also host a trade event where partner employers and organisations can speak to students about their products and services.

Competitors will take on practical tests based on real life work which will show their skills.

The winner of the UK final may also get the chance to compete on a world stage.

Students Corbin Peniket and Ben Hughes will be taking part in the electric and plumbing competitions respectively. Both have been practising their skills and knowledge in preparation.

Walsall College lecturer Andy Lees said: "It is a real honour for the college to be hosting such high World Skills UK competitions and shows the high standard of the facilities we have here. The students have been working very hard."

Get the punchline

Boxing and jokes will form the entertainment during a show at Walsall FC on October 13. Pick Amateur Boxing Club will provide the sport with comedian Barry Yorke also on the bill. For more information about the event, call 01922 651414.

Pros to help charity

A Willenhall man has enlisted the help of professional darts players to raise cash for a Birmingham-based charity supporting children born with a heart condition.

Terry Jenkins and Wayne Jones will take part in a charity darts night at the Central Banqueting Suite, in Vulcan Road, Bilston, on July 15 for Little Hearts Matter.

Event organiser Surinder Kumar,

aged 49, of Cedar Park Road, Willenhall, is hoping the event will raise £2,000.

The cash will be added to the £1,357.70 already collected in charity tins which have been in pubs across the area.

Mr Kumar said: "I was really touched when I came in contact with Little Hearts Matter. I know people who the charity has helped."

Clothes boost shop

Tesco in Willenhall has donated mens, womens and children's clothes to help boost Compton Hospice's coffers.

The store has been helping the hospice's network of shops by donating new, discontinued clothing from its store to help the charity smash its £1 million fundraising target.

Tesco community champion Alvin Briggs delivered thousands of

pounds worth of clothes to the Codsall branch of the hospice.

Claire Hoare, store manager, said: "We can't get the clothes out quick enough. Our customers see Alvin coming and we sell out of pretty much everything, pretty much straight away."

"We really appreciate every donation we receive and Tesco has definitely helped boost our sales."

Perfect match day as pair saddle up for life

Newly-weds Steve and Nicola Shaw lost more than five stone between them for their big day – after ditching their post-football pie and chips. The couple were married at Walsall's Banks's Stadium, where they are season ticket holders.

They decided to get into shape by changing their matchday routine. The couple, who live in Chase Road, Burntwood, took six months to lose the weight after joining the Hammerwich group of Slimming World. They were so successful they have been named the group's Slimmers of the Year.

walsallchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

Awards shortlist

A community college in Walsall has been shortlisted for an award for its commitment to helping staff and students to think more about the environment.

Walsall Adult and Community College has been shortlisted in the engaging employees in sustainability category in the Start 2011 awards.

The college has brought in measures such as making sure all rooms on a floor are full before another is used, introducing a recycling depot to save on paper and photocopying and has laid on workshops to teach staff about sustainability.

The organisation will learn if it has won at an awards ceremony on June 21 at Birmingham Town Hall. Maria Gilling, college principal said: "Naturally, we're delighted to hear we've been shortlisted for this award. This is the first time we have entered these awards."

Firefighters in pigeon rescue

A pigeon had to be freed by firefighters after getting stuck up a tree in Willenhall.

Fire crews used a ladder to climb up the 50ft high tree in Conway Crescent and help the bird.

The pigeon was found with wire wrapped around its leg and was cut free.

It was then caught in a net and handed over to a waiting RSPCA officer to be checked over before being released again.

Firefighter Mark Hallam, from Willenhall fire station, said: "The pigeon seemed fine once he was down."

Nicola, who has been overweight since her teens, and Steve, who has been overweight for 20 years, said they had tried all sorts of diets but had no success.

Steve, who has lost more than three stones, going from 19st to 15.5st, used to wear XXL tops and is now down to a large.

"I haven't been this small for over 20 years, and I love buying new clothes," says Steve, 49, who is a BT engineer. "We were both fed-up with our weight."

Steve said it was affecting everything in their lives from their health to their confidence and ability to have fun with their two-year-old son Oliver.

He added: "We had started lots of other diets in the past but it was always about what you couldn't eat, and I'd soon get desperate to eat some bread, or have a curry or a bit of chocolate."

Nicola, 24, a physiotherapy assistant, has lost 1st 8lb from her starting weight of 14st 2lb and dropped from size 18 to size 14.

Difference

She said: "We started getting a bit more active in our day-to-day life and realised you don't have to go to the gym; just getting out and about can make a big difference. Steve and I love playing outdoors with Oliver, and I now go to a Zumba class too."

Nicola says they have both got more energy and that doing the diet together helped them to lose their weight quickly.

"We were quite competitive and each week waited to see who had lost the most," she said. "The Bescot stadium is like our church, so there is no way we could have got married anywhere else."

The couple met at an away match when Walsall were playing Watford in 2003 and Nicola says it was love at first sight.

She said: "Steve was standing behind me, and when he made a comment, I turned around, and he really caught my eye."

"I didn't think Steve would be keen on dieting as he is a real man's man and likes his football and to have a drink. But he has done brilliantly."



Perfect match – a new-look Steve and Nicola



Steve Shaw – 'fed-up with weight'



Nicola Turner – 'competitive'

Council appoints new head

Walsall Council has appointed a permanent replacement for the £750-a-day temporary executive who has collected almost £170,000 in wages. Bethany Evans will replace Pauline Lucas as head of people services at the council from July 18.

Bosses came under fire for employing Ms Lucas at a time when they are trying to save £70 million and hundreds of jobs are also being axed.

She was taken on as interim head of human resources and development at the council more than a year ago at a cost of £750 a day and also given an allowance to stay at a top borough hotel.

By the time Ms Lucas moves on next month, the local authority will have shelled out around £168,000 in wages.

Ms Evans meanwhile has been head of people services at Birmingham Community Health Care NHS Trust for the past two years.

She was shortlisted for HR Director of the year in the HR Excellence Awards 2011 for her work.

"One of my key interests is in learning and development and that culture is something I'm keen to build on at Walsall. I'm looking forward to providing some strong direction and leadership to Walsall's HR team," Ms Evans said. She will be in charge of the council's 10,000 workers.

Trader admits selling fakes

A man found in possession of more than 50 items of fake designer clothes and footwear has been ordered to pay more than £700 in costs and carry out unpaid work.

Arron Street, aged 25, of Hadley Road, Walsall was found with counterfeit Nike trainers, Lyle and Scott polo shirts, G-Star Raw hooded tops and jeans, Timberland shorts, Dolce and Gabbana jeans and Henleys t-shirts in his van in Telford Road, Beechdale, on April 19, 2009.

Mrs Kerry Munro, prosecuting, said Street admitted making a living from selling counterfeit goods at car boot sales, gaining £30 profit on each occasion.

Mrs Munro said he told police he would buy the goods from various car boot sales and admitted knowing they were counterfeit.

Street, who was not represented, admitted seven charges of possessing goods with a false trade mark for sale or hire. He was ordered to pay £701.70 costs and to carry out 120 hours of unpaid work.

Goodies will be on sale at school fete

Bottles, chocolates and cosmetics will be among the goodies on sale at Walsall school's annual summer fete.

Staff and pupils hope for a big turnout at St Mary's the Mount Catholic Primary on June 25 in Jesson Road, Highgate from midday to 3pm.

Others schools in Walsall due to hold summer fairs on the same day include Lodge Farm JMI, Furzebank Way, Willenhall, from 11am to 1pm.

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Southern Cross deal talks

Stricken care homes provider Southern Cross is expected to reach an agreement with landlords, banks and the Government to ensure its 31,000 residents will be cared for, even if the company were to fall into administration.

The deal, which was set to be hammered out at a crunch meeting last week, is designed to allay fears that frail and elderly

residents may suffer disruption if the company collapses.

It could also help restore confidence in the company, which runs 752 care homes, in a bid to stem the decline in the number of residents. The company runs 20 facilities in the region including Walsall and five in south Staffordshire.

The meeting could see Southern Cross thrash out the frame-

work for a deal with its landlords and its banks to ensure its future survival. It is believed the most likely outcome will be that Southern survives the crisis, but with many landlords withdrawing their homes from the company in coming months and running them independently. This would leave the restructured company with a much smaller number of homes.

Parking fees cut bid

Parking charges could be cut to £3 a day on Walsall town centre car parks to fill spaces and cover lost income since Tesco opened a new supermarket.

Revenue from Walsall Council's multi-storey car park in Hatherton Road has slumped by £8,000 a month following the launch of the adjacent superstore. Underused car parks in Ward Street and Dudley Street are now being earmarked for a reduced

rate rather than the current daily £5 charge on council-owned sites.

The charge for a four-hour stay is also set to be reduced by £1 to £2.80 to encourage more shoppers to visit the town. However, blue badge holders may be charged for using car parks, although they will remain exempt of controversial on-street fares.

The recommendations will be considered by the decision-making cabinet.

New targets to be set for secondaries

Secondary schools in England are to be set a new target of securing five good GCSE passes for at least half of their pupils.

Education Secretary Michael Gove was due to set down the target in a speech, in which he will warn Britain risks falling behind Asian economies unless it accelerates the pace of educational improvement.

The new target of 50 per cent of pupils attaining five A*-C grade GCSEs, including English and maths, would require the worst-performing secondaries to raise their results to the level currently achieved by the average school. Those which fail could face takeover by a successful neighbouring academy school.

In the most recent round of exams, some 870 out of the 3,000 secondaries in England fell short of the benchmark. Mr Gove has already raised the target for five good GCSEs from 30 per cent to 35 per cent of pupils. He is expected to propose raising the threshold to 40 per cent in the 2012-13 academic year and 50 per cent by 2015.

According to the national press, he will point out that in Singapore, some 80 per cent of pupils already achieve at least grade C in English and maths at 16, compared to only half in the UK.

The paper also reported that he will announce plans to turn at least 88 struggling schools – 73 secondaries and 13 primaries – into academies over the next two years.

Meanwhile, it was claimed comprehensive school pupils are being denied places at leading universities after being "mis-sold" soft A-levels in subjects like media studies. A-levels in traditional subjects like maths, science and foreign languages are becoming the preserve of private and grammar schools, according to Tory MP Elizabeth Truss.

An analysis of official data, obtained by Ms Truss, suggests half as many students educated at comprehensive schools study three "rigorous" A-levels as those who attend fee-paying schools.

Five Focus sites are shut down

Five Focus DIY stores in the region, including two in Walsall have closed within a week, meaning the loss of more than 100 jobs.

Administrators have announced outlets in Wolverhampton, Wednesfield, Kingswinford, Aldridge and Walsall will be shut.

It had been hoped some of the stores would be saved.

There are 101 jobs that will go across the region's stores, according to administrators Ernst & Young. Simon Allport, from the firm, said: "We would like to thank all Focus DIY employees for their continued support in what has been a difficult and uncertain time."

Focus went into administration at the beginning of last month and it was announced that 122 stores across the country would close, with the loss of 3,000 jobs.

Buyers were found for a further 55 stores, including the shop in Brownhills, securing 19 jobs.

But Ernst & Young has announced final trading dates for all of the stores that will close. They include the loss of 17 jobs at shops in Wolverhampton and 17 in Wednesfield, 18 in Walsall, 19 in Aldridge and a further 30 in Kingswinford will go over the next seven days.

Kingfisher, owner of B&Q, has acquired 31 branches for £23 million. It plans to open them as B&Q stores. Owner of Wickes, Travis Perkins has bought 13 stores.

Fundraiser day at school

A school in Willenhall will host a fundraising fun day next month featuring a Zumba presentation, bouncy castle, penalty shoot-out and a barbecue. Beacon Primary in New Invention will hold the event on July 8 from 4-6pm for the Meningitis Trust. There will also be a raffle and all are welcome.

Jobless claims go up

Unemployment has fallen by 88,000 across the country, but the number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance has increased in Walsall, latest figures show.

The quarterly fall was the biggest in more than a decade.

The jobless total now stands at 2.43 million.

Across the West Midlands unemployment had fallen by 4,000 to 255,000 by the beginning of March, compared to the last three months of 2010.

But the number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance jumped by 19,600 last month to 1.49 million, the worst figure for more than a year.

The figures vary because not everyone classed as unemployed can claim Jobseeker's Allowance.

In Walsall the claimant count was up 134 to 10,299, or 6.5 per cent of the borough's working population – substantially above the national average of 3.8 per cent.

In Sandwell the picture was even more gloomy, with the number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance up 304 to 13,285, or 7.2 per cent.

Lessons in health

Homeopathy workshops will be staged at a Walsall centre.

The sessions will be led by homeopath Shirley Harvey between until July 30, costing £20 per person.

The first workshop, dealing with pregnancy, took place on June 18 at Anchor Meadows Health Centre, Aldridge.

On July 2, baby and toddler health will be followed by the minor health issues on July 16 and general first aid on July 30.

Anger at commuters clogging up streets

An upmarket area of Walsall is being used as an unofficial park and ride for drivers parking up and then catching the bus.

Vehicles are being left on the Park Hall estate off the main Birmingham Road for hours. The parked cars are clogging up residential streets, it has been claimed.

The unofficial park and ride facility has seen cars parked in roads such as Park Road and Queen's Road, prompting anger from nearby residents. It is believed motorists are parking and then catching the bus into Birmingham.

This way of commuting saves workers having to pay parking fees. Walsall Council transport chiefs say they are aware of the issue but there are no parking restrictions in place. And they admitted there are no plans to introduce them.

There have been problems elsewhere in the borough previously with cars being left in Blackwood Road, Streetly, as people catch the bus.

Council leader Mike Bird said there have been complaints from householders. He said: "Residents get angry

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with drivers who leave their cars there all day. People who live near bus routes and railway stations seem to suffer from this."

Paul Leighton, group leader for traffic management, said: "We are aware of residents' concerns and we have looked into them. There are currently no parking restrictions in this area and no plans to introduce any."

It comes after official plans for a park and ride near to Park Hall were scrapped by council chiefs.

Mooted

The project was first mooted more than two years ago and a parcel of land off Birmingham Road was earmarked for a 300-space car park.

But the plans for the facility off the Aston University Sports Ground fell through and bosses say they are no longer actively pursuing the project.

The aim of the scheme was to reduce the number of car trips into Walsall town centre.

A park-and-ride approach has been adopted and proved successful in other parts of the country including Oxford, Cambridge and Exeter.

Small companies drive jobs creation

The West Midlands has been named as the job creation hotspot of the UK, with small firms driving the recruitment surge.

Despite the continuing economic gloom, the UK's employment outlook is the most positive it has been for three years, according to recruitment firm Manpower.

But Manpower warned that while small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) were predicting job creation in the coming months, hiring intentions among the country's biggest businesses had fallen for three quarters in a row and remained "flat".

Those in the finance, banking and business services sector were most optimistic, while engineers and computer specialists were most in demand, a survey of 2,100 employers found.

Mark Cahill, managing director of Manpower, said: "It seems that when

it comes to job vacancies, small is beautiful.

"Candidates sometimes assume that bigger is better when it comes to employers, but these statistics clearly point to the opposite."

The responses reveal the West Midlands comes in as the most positive region in the third quarter of 2011, with the strongest outlook and job creation in a range of industry sectors.

Greg Hollis, operations manager for West Midlands at Manpower, said: "For the UK, manufacturing is experiencing the strongest outlook of plus-13 per cent in the third quarter 2011 with a phenomenal uplift from the prior quarter."

"This gives us a reason to cheer, as it is potentially a sign of a revival in this part of the country."

"Manpower is working actively with all clients in the region to satisfy their demands for staff."

Logo is a blooming winner



Antonia Pompa, and Laurie Drake, with winners Megan Killian, aged 14, and Stacey Bridges, 13.

Two Walsall schoolgirls have designed the winning logo for this year's Brownhills in Bloom competition.

Brownhills School pupils Megan Killian, aged 14, and Stacey Bridges, 13, were chosen from a shortlist of 28 by the judging panel made up of members of the Brownhills in Bloom organising committee. Megan, of Bickley Road, Rushall, drew a flower

and butterfly while Stacey, of Goscoe Lane, designed the lettering.

The logo is being used on all promotional materials associated with Brownhills' entry in this year's Heart of England in Bloom competition.

Laurie Drake, head of art at Brownhills School, said: "The children found the process of designing the logo extremely exciting as they knew they were designing for a live project."

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Rise in cost of living 'hitting poor hardest'

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Poor families have seen their day-to-day living costs rise 50 per cent faster than richer households since the recession struck, research claims.

The poorest fifth of households have seen the cost of the goods and services they use rise by 4.3 per cent a year between 2008 and 2010, significantly above the 2.7 per cent annual rate of inflation experienced by the richest fifth of households during the same period, according to the Institute for Fiscal Studies.

Pensioners and people who are dependent on state benefits have been hit particularly hard by rises to the cost of living, as they spend proportionately more of their income on food and fuel, while they are less likely to have benefited from low interest rates.

Pensioner

The average pensioner who is dependent on benefits has seen inflation increase by 4.6 per cent a year between 2008 and 2010, while a non-benefit-dependent pensioner has seen a 4.3 per cent annual rate of inflation.

People of working age who are dependent on benefits have seen the cost of the goods and services they use rise by about four per cent a year during the same period, significantly higher than the annual rises of 2.9 per cent faced by people of working age who do not rely on benefits.

The research, funded by consumer group Consumer Focus, found poorer households had been hit particularly hard by energy price rises, with domestic energy costs doubling between 2000 and 2010.

The poorest fifth of households spend about 9.4 per cent of their budget on energy, compared with just 4.4 per cent for the richest 20 per cent of households.

Food price hikes of 41 per cent during the past decade have also hit poorest families hardest, as they spend a fifth of their budget on food, nearly double the 10.1 per cent that richer households spend.

Snapshots of seasonal scenes

Wintry scenes of Walsall Arboretum and Shropshire in the spring have been put on display in the town centre.

Artist and photographer Paul Rees, of Upper Stonnall, launched his exhibition of 20 scenic photos taken across the region at The Crossing at St Paul's last week.

The free exhibition entitled The Emerging Seasons will be on display at the Darwall Street venue in Walsall until July 31.

The 64-year-old retired probation officer, of Bluebell Road, said he was overwhelmed with how much interest the display had attracted in its first day.

He said: "I've had an amazing response. They are uplifting scenic and wildlife images. It's giving me a buzz to see them up on the walls."

"There are scenes from around the region including canal boats in Aldridge and Walsall Arboretum in the winter."

"It's a great opportunity to showcase what I do and will bring people into The Crossings at St Paul's which is a not-for-profit Christian social enterprise."

"I hope to promote a sense of positivity and reinforcement that the Midlands offers places of beauty and interest," he added.



Photographer Paul Rees and his work at The Crossing at St Paul's in Walsall

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Options still open on closed baths

Willenhall Leisure Centre could be redeveloped as a cinema, offices, health clinic, creche or even back to its original use.

Despite many people believing that demolition was a done deal, council bosses said they would consider fresh options for the future of the closed-down building.

A development document has now been released for potential buyers or developers guiding them through the options for the site - with no mention of flattening the building.

Campaigners said it was a "positive sign" that could help them "pull some-

thing out of the fire". The development brief says it would consider three main options for the future of the Bath Street centre, which closed in August last year after being rated one of the worst performing leisure centres in the borough.

The first could see it used for assembly or leisure purposes, meaning the council would consider ventures such as a cinema, banqueting suite or bingo hall.

It also says offices would be acceptable.

The local authority would also consider applications to redevelop the site as a non-residential institution, which includes clinics, health centres and creches.

The document rules out residential use but adds: "As an alternative to redevelopment, reuse of the current leisure centre building may also be considered."

The centre will be marketed for eight to 12 weeks.

Councillor Sean Coughlan, representative for Willenhall South, said: "The pleasing thing for me is that one of the things it is saying as a no-go is residential development."

"I would still argue that local councillors would like to see it remain in public ownership through the council or asset transfer."

Ditch the cars call for town

Visitors to Walsall are being called to leave their cars at home instead of clogging up the town centre.

A Walsall Transport Strategy for 2010-2014 has been put together by highways chiefs looking at priorities over the coming years.

One is getting visitors to use alternative forms of transport although bosses insist the aim is not to stop long-stay car parking.

Transport chief councillor Tom Ansell said: "The transport strategy is designed to look at and raise ideas for discussion about improving and developing the transport network across Walsall to ensure people can move around the town as easily as possible."

"We always want to encourage people to consider their mode of transport and whether the car, for example, might be their best option or if they could get to their destination in a different way such as walking, cycling or car sharing."

Sheltered housing celebrates milestone

Residents of a sheltered housing scheme in Willenhall raised a glass to toast it being 20 years old.

St Alban's Court opened in New Street, Portobello, in 1991.

Residents and representatives from Bromford Housing celebrated the anniversary with a buffet, raffle and fun activities.

There are 48 residents at St Alban's Court, four of whom moved in when the building first opened. Hayley Murphy, service manager from Bromford Housing, said: "It's a lovely place to live and lovely people too. We have got four customers who have even been here since it opened."

The mayor of Wolverhampton, Bert Turner, was on hand to help with the festivities recently.

Soul sound

The Mysteries will play at The Memo, Lichfield Road, Brownhills on June 25. People can take their own drinks. Tickets are £6 each and available on 01543 372148 or 07511 045253 or at brownhills_memorial-hall@yahoo.co.uk



Resident Ronald Washbrook, mayoress Kath Turner, Amy Hawkins, Mayor Bert Turner, Iris Williams and Agnes Pierce with Hayley Murphy and Lisa Simpson from Bromford Housing raise a toast to the 20th anniversary

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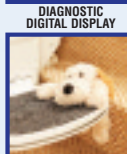
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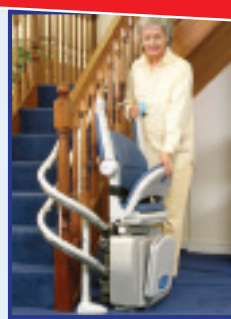
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Creating a dance school

Two owners of dance schools are creating a new one, starting at Moxley People's Centre.

Jade Howells, aged 23, of Wednesbury, who runs the Avia Dance School in West Bromwich, is teaming up with Louise Edwards from the Enhance Dance School based in Walsall to launch a venture to focus on Street Cheer—a mix of street dance and cheer-leading.

To find out more information, call Jade on 07870 738826.

Flowershow

Walsall Flower Arrangement Club will hold a demonstration at Aldridge Youth Theatre on July 5. The demonstration by Sharon Possert at the Noddy Park Road venue will take place at 7.30pm and admission is £5.

Zumba plea

A zumba teacher is wanted for a lifestyle initiative at Green Lane Baptist hall, Burrowes Street, Walsall. Call 07929 907368.

Park play equipment attacked by vandals

Vandals have thrown paint over equipment in a children's play area in Darlaston, leaving a £1,000 clean-up bill.

Paint has been poured, daubed and sprayed over most of the equipment at George Rose Park, off Herberts Park Road.

The Friends of Darlaston South Parks hit out at the attack and said they were disappointed the play area had been targeted.

The area had to be closed off to youngsters and families while the clean-up takes place.

Councillor Paul Bott, chairman of the Friends of George Rose park, said: "It seems despite all the money being invested in the park, some people just want to set us back. "This area is the only play area around the Rough Hay estate.

"The cost of getting it all cleaned up will be big and that play area has been there for years. It's very disappointing for something like this to happen.

"There is a £300,000 plan in place to improve the park and we get some yobs who just want to go and vandalise it more."

walsallchronicle@
expressandstar.co.uk

It is believed the paint attack happened sometime between 9pm on June 14 and 7.15am June 15.

Graham Hood, head of green-spaces at Walsall Council, said: "This is an absolutely despicable crime committed by mindless vandals.

"Youngsters have now temporarily lost their local play area while the place is cleaned up and we urge anyone who saw anyone acting suspiciously in the Park to contact Walsall Police."



Vandals splattered the play house



Councillor Paul Bott and his wife Chris examine damage done to a play slide

Band ready to rock at Beacon gig

A Walsall band is getting ready to rock one of the borough's best known attractions as they headline this year's Bands on the Beacon gig.

The Nicks impressed judges in the Star Beacon search for a local act to top the bill at a free family concert on July 10.

Manager Kelvin Cushman said the foursome was over the moon. "When I got the call to say we'd been selected I had to put the phone down because I wanted to scream," he said.

"It's a great opportunity for the band and they're looking forward to bringing their unique sound to Barr Beacon." The Nicks are made up of Macca Smith on vocals and bass, Gary Clarke on vocals and rhythm guitar, Daniel Stackhouse on lead guitar and Ste Yates on drums.

Landmark

Band on the Beacon II is being staged around the landmark war memorial from 1pm on July 10.

The open air concert, organised by Walsall Council, is aimed at making people aware of Raising the Barr – the Heritage Lottery Fund project to restore Barr Beacon's heritage features.

This includes the war memorial, a rare flagpole and railings around the historic Joseph Scott tree plantation.

The concert will start at 1pm with The Nicks taking to the stage at 4.10pm to close the show.

Jeff McBride, Walsall Council countryside development project officer, said: "The Nicks' unique sound really impressed the judges and we're delighted to shine a spotlight on home grown talent at this event."

The Nicks are looking for as much support as possible and want people to visit www.thenicks.org and to like them on Facebook.

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Figures show big drop in younger blood donors

walsallchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

There has been a 20 per cent drop in the number of young blood donors over the last decade – prompting fears of an “alarming generation gap” in blood donation.

Just 14 per cent of people who donate regularly are under 30, while more than two-thirds are over 40, say new NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) figures.

The 297,539 donors aged 17-34 in 2001 fell to 237,520 now. About 200,000 of all ages go off the register annually. NHSBT, backed by celebrities, wants 10,000 people to “make a date to donate”.

Its poll, released to coincide with World Blood Donor Day, found young people are “too busy” to donate or are frightened of the procedure.

The NHS needs 7,000 units of donated blood daily for procedures, including surgery, cancer treatment, blood disorders and difficult childbirths.

Jon Latham, NHSBT assistant director of blood donation, said: “We want to remind everyone that blood donation is one of the simplest ways you can save or improve a life – just one unit of blood can save the life of three adults or seven babies, and you can start donating from the age of 17.

Saving

“We also want to take the opportunity to thank our current donors for the invaluable contribution their donations make to saving lives and to ensuring blood stocks meet hospital demands.”

Three-quarters of people who had ever given blood last donated more than two years ago, so they were keen to emphasise the need to give blood on a regular basis.

Some four per cent of the UK population are active blood donors. People can give blood every 16 weeks, or three times a year.

Actress Kym Marsh, footballer Gary Lineker and TV presenter Kate Thornton are backing the campaign along with singer Sophie Ellis-Bextor, TV presenter Jenny Frost, actress Jill Halfpenny, Dancing On Ice star Jayne Torvill and DJ Sara Cox.

Ellis-Bextor said: “When I heard about the many mothers who receive blood during labour it really hit home how important it is for me to do my bit to help.”

Information is available at www.blood.co.uk or by calling 0300 123 2323. The survey of just over 180 young people found one in 10 is too busy to donate, while 37 per cent said they are scared of needles.

Wildlife updates on the web

The internet is being used to let people know about wildlife in Walsall – with almost 300 people logging on to find out more.

Countryside ranger Morgan Bowers is using the popular social networking site Twitter to give residents an insight into sightings and events within the borough.

She has been writing about the day-to-day life of a countryside ranger since late March and says followers love having up-to-the-minute information and pictures.

Morgan said: “So many people share their lives with their friends through sites like Twitter and Facebook; we need to keep up with the way people communicate with each other.

“Being on Twitter means that we can share live information about what we’re doing, what’s going on in the countryside and what sort of wildlife is out and about.

“It also gives people an idea of what it’s like in the day-to-day life of a countryside ranger.”

A Facebook site has also been set up while photos are shared on Flickr. People can follow @walsallwildlife on Twitter, or search for ‘Walsall Wildlife’ on Facebook and Flickr.



Walsall countryside ranger Morgan Bowers finds inspiration for her Twitter site

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Claire	1st 2lbs	19 1/2 inches	10 Weeks	Denise	1st 1lb	17 1/2 inches	8 Weeks
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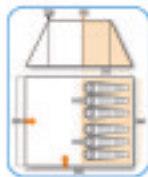
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thechronicle**Jobs cut is less than predicted**

Around 90 workers will leave the private firm that delivers education in Walsall – up to 30 fewer than initially feared.

A three-month consultation period involving employees at Serco was launched earlier this year, with concerns that up to 120 non-teaching staff could be made redundant.

Bosses have now confirmed the amount of posts to go from August 31 is less than expected. It is hoped some positions can still be maintained.

Serco spokesman Mark Vaughan said today: "Walsall Children's Services-Serco has almost finalised the staffing arrangements that will be in place from Septem-

ber 2011. With a lot of hard work, the number of potential redundancies has been reduced from the original estimate and the worst case situation could see around 90 leaving the organisation this summer, 30 of whom are volunteers.

"Several further jobs could be maintained if there is sufficient demand for services from schools.

"In areas such as school improvement, national government funding has previously financed these jobs," he added.

"Now this funding has been removed it is up to schools to decide whether to commission such services. If they do, further roles can and will be maintained.

"Walsall Children's Services-Serco is

committed to providing quality services to schools and families and will continue to do so for those services that are still required in the future."

It was initially believed between 110 and 120 workers could go. In total, more than 200 staff at the company were told that their positions were "at risk."

Posts are being axed due to Serco's contract with Walsall Council being reduced by £7.7 million.

Serco in Pelsall Road, Rushall, has previously said job losses would be confined to back office or advisory staff where possible.

The firm, which employs around 400 people in Walsall in non-teaching jobs.

Copper is to be removed

Remaining copper on the damaged war memorial at Barr Beacon is to be removed to prevent further thefts.

Metal thieves have struck at the monument for the second time this year leaving a repair bill running into thousands.

At a meeting of The Barr Beacon Trust last week, members decided not to carry out any repairs for the time being after the site was again targeted recently. The move followed estimates for a temporary repair hitting the £8,000 mark.

Trust chairman and council deputy leader Adrian Andrew said: "We have decided not to repair it.

"The rest of the copper will be taken off. We will have it covered with heavy duty canvas to make the structure water tight for now.

"It will be restored and repaired if and when we get money from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The mood at the meeting was of annoyance and anger."

Jake's green fingers get the royal ascent

A Walsall horticulture student has secured his dream job at a Royal estate.

Jake Armstrong-Frost, aged 18, of Pelsall, Walsall, has been recruited to work in the grounds of Sandringham Estate, the Queen's Norfolk retreat.

He is a second year National Diploma student at South Staffordshire College's Rodbaston Campus, Penkridge.

Jake developed a keen interest in historical gardens through his college work placements at some of the country's best known estates, including Shugborough, near Stafford, and Witley Court and Gardens, Worcestershire.

Jake, who is nearing the end of his two-year course, applied to the Historic and Botanic Garden bursary scheme, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and supported by the Royal Horticulture Society (RHS).

He travelled to the RHS head office in London for his interview with scheme co-ordinator Fiona Dennis and head gardeners from Sandringham and Beningbrough Hall.

"Throughout my time at South Staffordshire College my lecturers



Royal recruit - Jake Armstrong-Frost

have been supportive and helpful, special thanks must go to my progression coach Chris Murphy who is an inspiration to our group and someone who always believes in his students.

Guide

"My time at college has set me in good stead to go forward into a career in horticulture but I will never forget where it all started, those who helped guide me

through, those who helped me secure this opportunity," said Jake.

Chris Murphy, horticulture lecturer, said "We are delighted that Jake has received such a great offer and it's very well deserved."

"The College's record for job placement is excellent – all of the students on the National Diploma in Horticulture course have already got jobs or a university placement."



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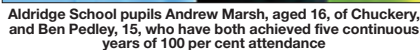
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thechronicle

Board to oversee change

A board of West Midland business leaders and people interested in canals has been set up to prepare for the Government to hand over control of waterways to an independent body.

British Waterways is set to become a body, similar to the National Trust, next year.

A group of business people chaired by Peter Mathews, of the Black Country Consortium and managing director of Black Country Metals, will work alongside British Waterways on a trial basis to see how the organisation can become self-sufficient and

cut its ties with the Government. British Waterways manages and cares for 2,200 miles of canals, rivers and docks, as well as 2,555 listed buildings and structures. The Local Waterway Partnership will work out how the region's waterways should operate from 2012 in getting more people involved in canals and rivers.

The trial Partnership was due to hold its first meeting last week, where the new team will begin the process of working through management plans, looking at how to attract new volunteers and identifying potential

sources of funds. The partnership includes Dudley councillor David Caunt, Anne Cranston from environmental charity Groundwork, Nick Crombie, the chief executive of Bilston based Heantun Housing Association, Matt Ward, the general manager of the Copthorne Hotel in Dudley and Neil Wyatt, the chief executive of the Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country.

Mr Mathews said: "The canals and rivers in the West Midlands are an integral part of the landscape."

Plain sailing for colourful canal festival

Colourful narrowboat art and a children's entertainer will be among the attractions at an annual canal festival.

Thousands of visitors are due to flock to the Brownhills waterfront in Silver Street for the show which on June 26.

It will be opened by Aldridge-Brownhills MP Richard Shepherd for the first time in its nine-year history.

Family entertainer Flip the Clown will be among the guests with new Mayor of Walsall Councillor Garry Perry at the Wyrley & Essington Canal.

There will be stalls, boat trips, narrowboats, canoeing, refreshments, a vintage bus, and music at the show running from 10am to 4pm.

It is organised by residents' group Brownhills Local Committee which said it was hoping for fine weather and another year of bumper crowds at the boating and craft extravaganza. The popular festival was launched to promote community awareness.



Ready for the festival are, left, Barry Poxon, Doug Birch and Brian Stringer

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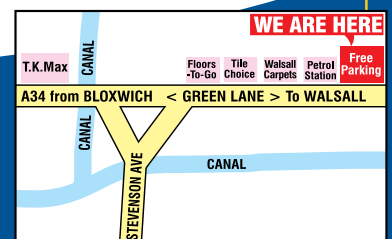
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Traffic officer Chris Lewis with the metal filings

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More than a ton of the filings was collected by the Highways Agency from the carriageway between junction 10 at Walsall and junction nine at Wednesbury.

Three lanes of the busy southbound route were closed as miles of tailbacks were caused past junction 11 at Cannock at around 8am on June 15.

The hard shoulder was opened up from 8.45am as the Highways Agency bought in a mechanical sweeper to clear the main stretch used by 160,000 motorists a day. All lanes were reopened again by midday but there was a knock-on effect for traffic until the afternoon.

Highways Agency spokesman Mik Barton said: "This was one of the more awkward incidents because of the nature of what it was and the timing and location. It was inconvenient to drivers at the beginning of rush hour but we did our best to minimise disruption and get lanes open pretty quickly."

Motorcyclist, 43, dies after crash with lorry

walsallchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

A motorcyclist has been killed in a crash with a lorry in Darlaston. The 43-year-old was in the accident at the junction of Heath Road and Walsall Road.

He was taken to Walsall Manor Hospital but was pronounced dead shortly after arrival following the 6.50am crash, just off the mini-roundabout near to the Total petrol station on June 16.

West Midlands Ambulance Service spokesman John Hawker said: "The man riding the motorcycle suffered multiple serious injuries and was in traumatic cardiac arrest."

"He received advanced life support at the scene and treatment was continued as he was transferred to hospital."

"The hospital had been pre-alerted to the man's arrival and a trauma team were on standby."

Efforts

"Unfortunately, despite the best efforts of ambulance crews and hospital staff, nothing could be done to save the man and he was confirmed dead shortly after arriving at hospital."

The Suzuki motorcycle and a Scania lorry belonging to European Metal Recycling, based in Bentley Road South, Darlaston, collided.

Officers stood guard at the cordon in Heath Road, ushering traffic away from the scene around the mini-roundabout connecting it with Walsall Road and Steelmans Road.

An ambulance service spokesman said an ambulance, rapid response vehicle and incident support officer were dispatched. Firefighters from Wednesbury also attended.

Meanwhile, a driver was seriously injured in a crash on the A34 in Brocton, near Cannock. The accident involving a Fiat panel van, a BMW and a Vauxhall Astra happened at 8.20pm on June 15.

Heath Road was cordoned off in both directions by emergency services.

Police are appealing for witnesses. Any witnesses should contact the Collision Investigation Unit at Aston on 0345 113 5000.



The scene of the fatal crash that happened in Heath Road, Darlaston

Two are guilty of handling

Two men from Walsall have admitted handling stolen vehicles and weighing them in for cash at a scrapyard.

Ashley Danks, aged 25, of Severn Road, Blakenall, and Tom Loveridge, 27, also of Severn Road, admitted handling a stolen Ford Sierra, worth £2,500, and Ford Transit van, worth £1,000, when they appeared at Walsall Magistrates Court last week.

Mrs Maggie Meakin, prosecuting, said the Ford Sierra had been stolen from an address in Wolverhampton Road, Walsall, overnight between April 14 and 15.

Nurseries

She said the Ford Transit van had also been stolen from Kingswood Nurseries, in Norton Lane, Walsall, overnight between April 15 and 16.

She said: "Police made inquiries which showed the vehicles were weighed in at Walsall Iron and Steel scrapyard."

The offences date back to April 16. Mrs Meakin said Danks had been involved in weighing in both vehicles but the tow truck he had used was registered to Loveridge.

In mitigation, Mr Nigel Ford agreed compensation should be given but questioned the value of the Ford Sierra.

The case was adjourned for reports. Loveridge will appear at Walsall Magistrates Court for sentence on June 22 and Danks is due to be sentenced at the court on June 28.

Petition raised on bus route

A campaign is gathering pace to safeguard a Walsall bus service amid fears it may be axed.

Users of the 333 bus, which runs between Wolverhampton and Walsall, said they would be left "almost housebound" if the route was scrapped.

The service takes in estates in Bentley and Willenhall as well as the two main town centres.

But bosses at Centro and National Express last week quashed rumours

the bus route was being axed and said no decisions had yet been made.

They said the service, along with all other bus routes in Wolverhampton, was being looked at as part of a wider network review.

Valuable

But residents in Bentley have set up a petition to let transport bosses know how valuable the bus is to them following rumours the route will be cut. Shirley Small, petition

organiser, said the service was "life-line" to many. She added: "We would be greatly inconvenienced and would be rendered housebound if the service was stopped."

The 75-year-old, from Bentley, said there were a lot of elderly people living in the area who would struggle to walk to bus stops further afield.

Councillor Bill Madeley said he had been inundated with calls and would raise the issue at next month's council meeting.



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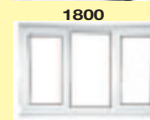
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thechronicle

Pubs glam up for ladies' day



Landlady of the Black Country Arms Debbie Humphries and bar staff Kelly Holford and Elaine Tysall encourage women to discover the taste of real ale

A Walsall pub was one among three in the region which was celebrating Ascot ladies' day by trying to get more women sipping real ale.

The Black Country Arms, Walsall; The Court House, Dudley and The Whitley, Halesowen were all taking inspiration from Royal Ascot. The real ale pubs, all run by Black Country Traditional Inns, were offering women complimentary tasters of three beers of their choice.

These were being served in the old fashioned measure of a third of a pint,

traditionally known as a stick. Black Country Ales Brewery, Lower Gornal was sponsoring the events.

Brewery director Martin Wilkins said: "More and more ladies are getting to enjoy drinking real ale. "But it remains true that, because beer used to be considered a drink for the men, a large proportion of the fairer sex have never sampled real ale."

Publicans were on hand to explain the differences between the beers on offer.

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thechronicle

Contractor choice on £4.5m centre is close

walsallchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

Contractors for work on Pelsall's new £4.5 million health centre and library are expected to be appointed by the end of this month.

The village's former GP surgery and library building in High Street is to be flattened to make way for the new look multi-million pound facility.

Site clearance work has started, with the main demolition process to be carried out later. The library has been relocated to a temporary base at the former Social Services offices in Norton Road until the new facilities open next year.

Leisure chief councillor Anthony Harris said: "General site clearance works are now under way."

Officers inform me that the appointment of the contractors is due to be finalised within the next few weeks with a view to them starting work, which will initially involve the demolition of the building, later this summer.

Venture

"Under the current timetable the work is due to be completed by Autumn 2012," he added.

The new development is a joint venture between the council, NHS Walsall and Walsall Children's Services Serco.

There had been fears the scheme could be at risk due to widespread budget cuts. But council chiefs insisted the development was much-needed and would go ahead.

It was announced in spring that the final funding instalment had been received and a formal planning application for the temporary library was approved.

The temporary home, a two-storey Victorian building, is open on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9am to 1pm and 2-6pm. Users can also visit on a Saturday between 9am and 1pm then 2-4pm.

The new development on the former site will have a children's centre, health centre, and four doctor surgeries alongside the library.

Residents were given the chance to have their say on the project.

Walsall Mayor, councillor Garry Perry has welcomed the long-awaited plans insisting it will create a "first-class family health facility."

Clear up after fly-tippers strike



Walsall Council's Street Pride team clears up rubbish in Dumblederry Lane, Aldridge

Two hundred tyres, traffic cones, wooden pallets and plastic pipes have been removed from two roads after fly-tippers struck.

Mounds of waste have been dumped in Beecham Close and Dumblederry Lane, Aldridge. Council clean-up teams are hard at work clearing away the mess and have had to bring in a digger due to the large amount of rubbish.

The tyres have been dumped on the road in Beecham Close, while the other waste has been strewn on private land in Dumblederry Lane. Fly-tipping in Walsall costs taxpayers £85,000 a year.

Walsall Council environment chief, Councillor Tom Ansell, condemned the latest fly-tipping. He said the council had been forced to remove 230 tons of illegally dumped waste so far this year. He said: "Fly-tipping is an ongoing problem and it is an issue which all councils across the country are faced with."

Council bosses are now working to secure fly-tipping hotspots such as Minor Street, Reaymer Close, Chaucer Road and Shakespeare Crescent. To report fly-tipping in Walsall call 01922 653344.



Councillor Tom Ansell and Mike Hatchard by a pile of tyres in Beecham Close

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Hopes of creating a new branch of Legion

walsallchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

A new branch of the Royal British Legion may be poised to open to coincide with the 90th anniversary of the organisation.

Volunteers in Pelsall, Walsall are awaiting approval for the village's first branch. Aimed at helping the young and old with military links, it will be the first new branch in South Staffordshire for at least 15 years and the first nationally for at least 11.

Previously village fundraisers supported the annual poppy collection organised by a branch in Aldridge.

Gordon Clift, aged 51, joined the Royal Artillery at 17 and was then in Territorial Army D Company 2nd Mercia Regiment at Walsall.

"The Royal British Legion is often associated with old soldiers, but we hope to attract young people and change perceptions of what it is about," said Mr Clift, of Avon Crescent.

Veterans

Normandy Landings veteran Sim Mayou, 85, of Pelsall, who was in the Royal Navy Patrol Service, said: "I am a member of the Aldridge branch and I also visit Wednesbury sometimes. There are not many old veterans left in Pelsall now and those who are here have travelled outside the area to attend meetings, so this would be a good move."

Mike Morris, Legion South Staffordshire county secretary, said the application would be considered by his committee before going to the charity's membership council for final approval.

"I have been county secretary for 15 years and this is the first new group we've had," he said. "They are very keen and we'll be only too happy to have them."

Pelsall poppy appeal organiser Karen Clift said consultation events were being held. On Armed Forces Day, June 25 they will be near the clock in High Street from 10am to midday.

"We need 15 people on board before we can start it up and we are well on our way, but we need more," she said. "We want as many people as possible to come and talk to us about the idea and register their interest." The committee last year raised £943 for the poppy appeal.

Cannock branch disbanded in July after no one joined a committee to keep it running. Others in Codsall and Walsall are also closed.

Legion spokeswoman Alisha Chapman said: "We are not aware of any new Royal British Legion branches being created since implementing our new database system in 2000."



Alison Vaughan, left, Carl Lovatt and Karen Clift back a new Royal British Legion branch

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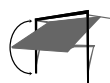
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£116,000 scheme to illuminate landmarks

Landmarks are set to be lit up and markers put in the pavement as part of a new £116,000 scheme to show off Walsall town centre.

Council bosses want to help guide shoppers and visitors around the area.

New attractions such as the Tesco superstore and Waterfront development would be highlighted by markers in the pavements. Statues such as the concrete hippo would be illuminated. Council bosses teamed up with Walsall College and The New Art Gallery Walsall to work on the scheme. Residents can have a say on the features.

Regeneration chief Councillor Adrian Andrew, said it would help connect Manor Hospital, the new college building, the



Town hippo could soon be lit up

Tesco Extra superstore and Walsall Waterfront development and the main shopping area.

"Walsall town centre is a great place to live, work and shop," Councillor Andrew said. "There are so many landmarks and much-loved places in the town centre like the hippo on the Bridge, the Victorian Arcade and Taylor's music shop on Bridge

Street There's also contested landmarks like the Overstrand which we are looking to demolish.

"We want to celebrate the creativity and pride in the town. We want Walsall people to have a say in this and we want whatever ideas do emerge to be made in Walsall. After all, Walsall is known as the town of 100 trades."

Funding has come from agreements with developers given planning permission to build in the town centre.

Councillor Andrew said it was an innovative way to direct people across the town centre. It was brilliant to have creative young people proud of their town.

They were asking people what they would like to see to build pride in the town centre. It is hoped features will be in by the end of the year. For information, call Cherry Shine on 01922 652537.

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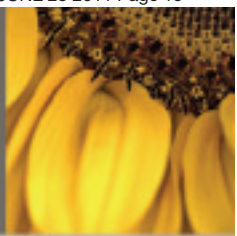
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Cameron Mackintosh's new hit British musical **BETTY BLUE EYES** has just opened to rave reviews in London's glittering West End. It's 1947 and excitement is growing as the good folk of Shepardsford, Yorkshire prepare to celebrate the forthcoming Royal Wedding of Princess Elizabeth to Philip Mountbatten. Determined to defy strict rationing measures and mark the special occasion accordingly, members of the town's Council are fattening up a highly illegal pig called Betty for a lavish banquet in honour of the royal couple. Rejected by the town for being nobodies, Gilbert and his social climbing wife Joyce resolve to steal the pig – but will it save Betty's bacon? Sarah Lancashire and Reece Shearsmith lead a marvellous cast including Olivier Award winners Adrian Scarborough and David Bamber and, of course, Betty as herself.

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thechronicle

MP calls for derelict pub site to be secured

walsallchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

A Walsall MP has called for an eyesore Bloxwich pub, which has become a magnet for vandals and metal thieves, to be secured until it is redeveloped.

Walsall MP David Winnick wrote to Walsall Council to raise fears over The Eagle in Cresswell Crescent, which is derelict.

Planning permission was given to SEP Properties Ltd last year for 17 one-bedroom flats on land where the pub stands. However, it has fallen into further disrepair since consent was given, bringing problems of anti-social behaviour.

The Walsall North MP has now written to the council in an attempt to try to speed up the proposed development and get the pub bulldozed.

In a letter replying to Mr Winnick, Walsall Council's executive director for regeneration Tim Johnson said the owners still needed to sign a Section 106 agreement, making provisions for urban open space and affordable housing.

Representatives

Planning permission would then be issued, he added. But Mr Johnson said in the meantime he had contacted the developer's representatives calling for the site to be secured.

He added: "I have contacted the agent to advise him of the residents' concerns about the deterioration of the building which is encouraging anti-social behaviour and have requested that steps are taken to secure the site in the meantime."

Bloxwich councillors Fred Westley and Sue Fletcher-Hall have also campaigned for immediate action to be taken at the site and for the building to be demolished.

Mr Winnick said: "I am pleased the agent for the owners was contacted, advising him of the residents' concern about the state of the building and have requested that steps are taken to secure the site in the meantime."

"It is to be hoped the owners will take account of the strong feelings of residents in this matter," he added.

The pub, which stands at the junction of Tintern Crescent, has been out of use since 2007. It closed after Stuart Nelson was shot in the leg after a fight broke out there on St Patrick's Day.

Students curry favour with kits

Walsall College hospitality students proved a sizzling success after teaming up with entrepreneur Sally Hares.

They helped her develop her Hares's Moor DIY Curry Kits as part of a project.

Kits contain basic ingredients, such as unpeeled fresh root ginger, whole garlic cloves, fresh curry leaves and chillies.

Mrs Hares wants to increase the range of kits and teamed up with students in a project funded through the Working Neighbourhoods Fund by Walsall Council.

It helps support businesses and lets young people gain work placement opportunities.

Mrs Hares said: "Walsall College HND Hospitality Management students have been brilliant at helping me develop the new recipes."

"The young men and women that we've been working with have been extremely eager and hard working – it's great to have their points of view and feedback."

Guru Paudel, second year HND Hospitality Management student, said that they enjoyed working with Sally on her product.



College hospitality students Nazra Aaman, aged 24, Michelle Hindley, 24, Guru Paudel, 24 working on curry kits with entrepreneur Sally Hares



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GKN site earmarked for demolition

An iconic car parts factory is poised to be demolished after production was wound down and hundreds of staff transferred.

An application to flatten GKN Drive-line, Middlemore Lane, Aldridge, has been lodged with Walsall Council.

More than 200 jobs have been moved from the plant after it was announced workers were to move to a centre of excellence in Erdington two years ago.

Staff have been gradually transferring and earlier this year only 60 people remained on site.

Demolition could begin as early as this month and is likely take around five months. All buildings are earmarked to go apart from a gas house and sub station.

The company has been in the town for more than 50 years and bulldozing the grounds will allow for regeneration.

A statement issued to council planners on behalf of GKN by Steven Gandley from DTZ said demolition was needed to avoid the risk of vandalism of derelict buildings.

"The site will be left clean, tidy and secure to allow for future development," he added. Bosses announced plans to close the site in 2009 and transfer remaining workers to its "centre of excellence" in Erdington.

They recently admitted while GKN's business has improved in line with the recovery of the automotive market it is still less than it was in 2008.

Earlier this year the company said sales had increased by 35 per cent as strong demand in China, India and North America pushed global sales of light vehicles up 24 per cent.

The company announced in 2009 a total of 323 jobs would be lost with the closures of its factories in Aldridge and in Great Barr which has already shut.

Paul Dinwiddy, spokesman for GKN, said virtually the whole work force at Aldridge has now been moved to Erdington, and all the machinery will be transferred over by the end of this month.

He said: "We thought demolition was the most appropriate thing. We have been marketing the Aldridge site for months."

thechronicle

Free meal for the military

Members of the Armed Forces can get a free carvery meal at a Walsall pub.

The Crown, Anchor Road, Aldridge, is supporting the 2011 national Armed Forces Day by offering the meal to all Armed Forces members past and present between June 20 and 25.

All those eligible can download a voucher at www.crownarcaries.co.uk and present it along with their current ID card or veteran label badge to staff at the Crown.

Tracey Clarke, manager at the Crown, said: "We hope a meal on the house will provide a hearty morale boost for all our hardworking troops and proud veterans in the week leading up to and on Armed Forces Day itself, Saturday, June 25."

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Celebration time as Harry reaches 100



Harry Cooper celebrates his 100th birthday with family and friends

A man who assembled Spitfire tailplanes during the Second World War has celebrated his 100th birthday.

Harry Cooper marked the occasion last week with family and friends at a party at the Mali Jenkins Specialist Residential Home, The Crescent, Walsall, where he moved three months ago.

Mr Cooper previously lived in Norman Road in the town for more than 20 years, after moving from Handsworth, where he was born and grew up. He was one of five children and attended Hamilton Road School, in the same street where he lived. As a teenager, Mr Cooper delivered milk on a horse-drawn cart and developed a love of cars after working in a garage.

He bought his first car, a Bullnose Morris, at the age of 17 for £19. During the Second World War he married Roma, who died in 1999, aged 87.

During the war, he was also an officer in the Home Guard and worked at the Spitfire factory in Castle Bromwich. Afterwards, he made shelving at Metal-rax Ltd, Bordesley Green, and later became a managing director.

Mr Cooper said: "I've had a wonderful life."



Mr Cooper in his 20s

Play area calls for flats site

Housing chiefs in Walsall are considering requests to turn the site of a former block of flats into a playground.

Families in Proffitt Street and Cannon Street North, Ryecroft have collected a 50-signature petition, calling on the landowner to install a play area.

Residents were relieved earlier this year when the low rise flats were finally bulldozed following a seven-year legal wrangle between the council and Walsall Housing Group.

They now want the plot to be made into a play area.

Working

Walsall Housing Group's director of housing Rob Gilham said: "We are keen to see the site used productively and are working with the community to open up the land and make it available for recreation."

His response follows a petition organised by Proffitt Street resident Caroline Halls who said: "Everybody was happy about the flats coming down."

"We would like a basketball pitch for the older children on one part of it and something for the younger children on the other part."

"The children are too young to walk up the road to the North Walsall play area. We would like to see a play area suitable for toddlers to 15-year-olds could use."

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Former teacher David dies, 78



David Allsopp with wife Margaret collecting his MBE from Buckingham Palace in 2002.

A former Walsall teacher who was awarded an MBE after years of serving the community has died.

David Allsopp, who was deputy head at TP Riley Comprehensive School, in Bloxwich, died on May 25 aged 78.

After retiring in the late 1980s due to ill health David threw himself into community projects and was a dedicated volunteer for Walsall Victim Support.

He was later appointed chairman of the West Midlands Federation of Victim Support for which he was honoured in 2002.

Eric Patton, David's son-in-law, said: "He will be missed by a lot of people. He was a very instrumental member in Victim Support and initiated a lot of new things that pushed the movement forward."

"He was a quiet and humble man

By Sarah Hazelwood

who was happy to help, the MBE was a complete shock to him but an award he truly deserved."

David moved to Walsall in 1940 where he lived in Slaney Road with his wife Margaret, who died in July 2004 and was also a teacher.

In his later years the keen sailor suffered with Parkinson's disease and Lewy's Bodies Dementia. After being admitted to Bloxwich Hospital in December last year he chose to move up to Aberdeen to be closer to his daughter and grandchildren.

Three months later David was admitted to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary where he succumbed to pneumonia.

He leaves behind two children, two grandchildren and an older brother.

thechronicle

Old building is to be levelled

A derelict building that has become a magnet for vandals will be demolished.

Lime House, Littleton Street West, is likely to be flattened after a notice of demolition was submitted to the council.

The building, which lies on one of the town's main roads, will be levelled as part of Walsall's £400 million Gigaport project.

The Gigaport scheme is a long-term plan to create a business corridor in the town centre bringing in big-name companies.

It will include offices, hotels and leisure facilities all hooked up to high speed internet.

An application submitted to the council says Lime House is "vacant, derelict and under vandal attack with unauthorised entry and use".

It adds the demolition is "also in preparation for the town centre Gigaport."

Regeneration boss Councillor Adrian Andrew said bulldozing Lime House may not be a significant step in the future of the ambitious Gigaport scheme, but the move would deal with a problem building on a main route.

"It is a significant step in clearing a site because obviously cleared sites are more attractive," he said.

"It has become derelict and vandalised and it does look a bit out of place next to the new college."

Demolition work is expected to start around July 11 and is likely to take more than three weeks.

In August last year, a man's body was found in the derelict Lime House building. Lime House used to be the base for Walsall Council's child guidance workers. It was also formerly used by sea cadets as a meeting point. It is located next door to the new college, which started welcoming students in September 2009.

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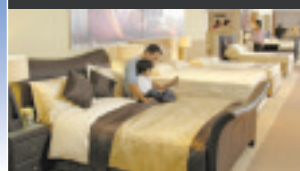
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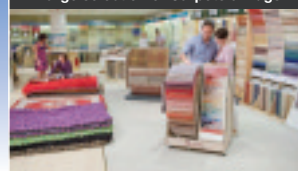
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COMPETITION

Joust a minute, tickets going free

THE ultimate spectator sport returns to Kenilworth Castle in July and the Chroni-
cles have teamed up with English Heritage to offer 10 family tickets for close-up views of all the action.

Each ticket will also incorporate a month's free pass to Kenilworth Castle valid until August 10, to include all Time Traveller Go Archaeology and Time Traveller Go Knights and Princesses children activity events (Normal family admission is £20.80).

For two days – Saturday, July 9 and Sunday, July 10 – the castle's grounds will be filled with the pageantry of the medieval joust as visitors choose the knight that they want to support and cheer him on to victory in the medieval equiva-

lent of the World Cup!

"Our jousters use special lances with balsa-wood tips, designed to retain all the spectacle of splintering wood, but without the potential injuries," says English Heritage's regional events manager, Karen Pike. "That said, when two knights and their horses, each weighing over a tonne with all of their armour, are speeding towards each other at around 30mph, even our lances still pack a real punch, and it requires all the skill of the rider to stay on the horse!"

The Grand Medieval Joust is



Enjoy a close-up view of the action

not just about the competition; visitors will enjoy all the fun of a full medieval pageant, with medieval music and dance, spectacular displays of falconry and English Heritage's official court jester to keep the crowds entertained!

The event runs from 11am-5pm, with the castle itself opening an hour earlier at 10am. Admission, which includes entry to the site, the Elizabethan Garden and the Grand Medieval Joust is £10 for adults, £9 for concessions and £6 for children, with a family ticket (two adults and up to three children) for £26.

English Heritage members receive discounted entry of £2 for adults, £1.80 for concessions and £1.20 for children, or £5.20 for a family ticket.

A Park & Ride service will run every 10-15 minutes from 10am-6pm from Kenilworth clock tower bus stop. Park in the town centre car parks,

charges may apply. Disabled parking available at the main castle car park.

For more information, visit www.english-heritage.org.uk/kenilworth or call 01926 852078.

For your chance to win, just answer this simple question:

What is the tip of the jousting knight's lance made of?

a: Iron
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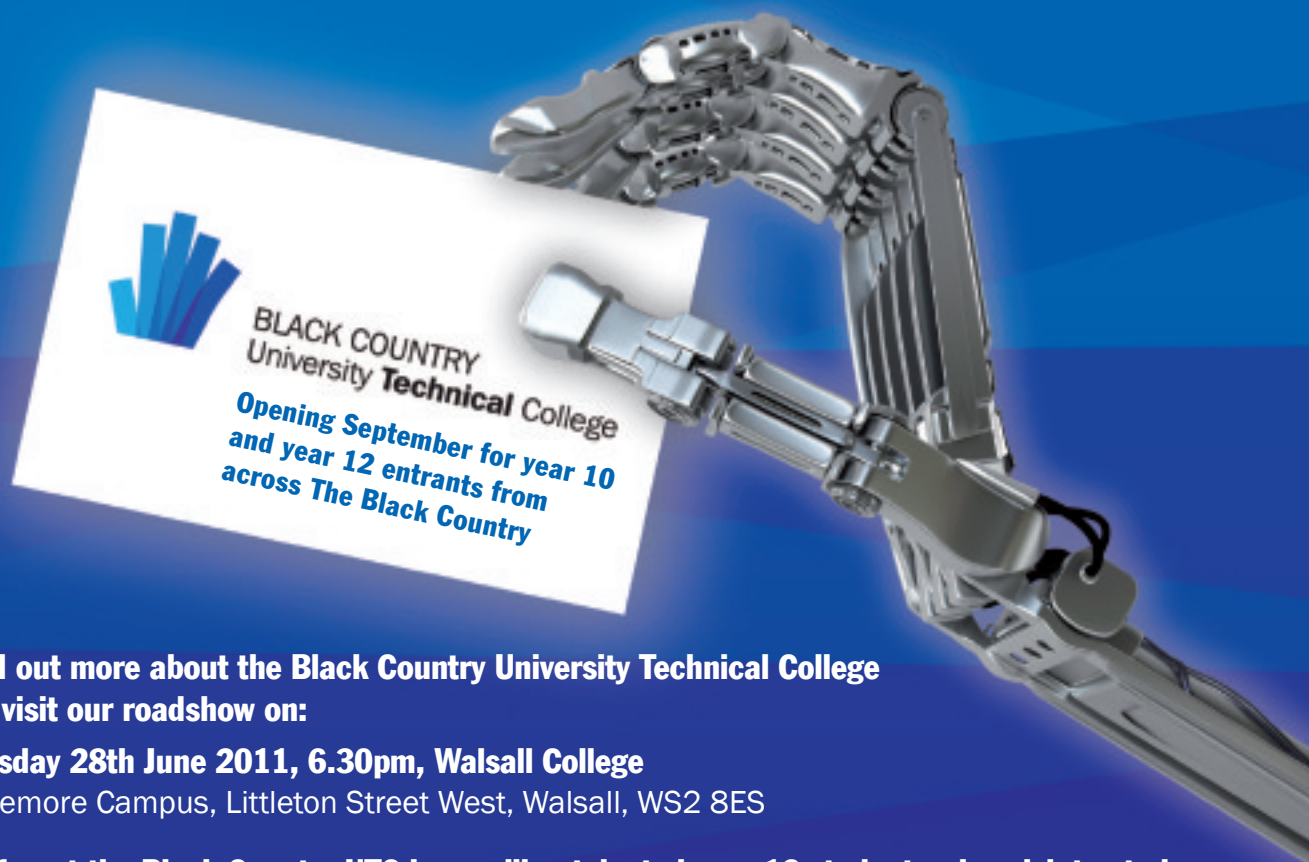
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Information sessions:

We also hold information sessions every **Monday at 4pm - 5pm** at **Walsall College, Wisemore Campus.**

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Visitors to the Pelsall Canal Festival surround the barges moored up for the event

This week's pictures were taken by Jody Astbury of Walsall who was out and about with her camera during the recent canal festival which was held in Pelsall.



A dog on one of the crafts enjoying the sun



An ornate funnel on one of the barges



One of the barges heading for the canal festival.

Snapshots of life in the borough

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There is no limit on the age or the subject all we ask is that they be as sharp and clear as possible and must be of reasonable quality for publication and of course feature some area or aspect of Walsall and its life.

Send them in with your name, address and contact number and a brief description of what the picture shows.

Also we would like to hear about any interesting tales or stories attached to the photograph. Send them in either as a hard copy or electronically and we will do the rest. So get those cameras snapping, dig out those dusty old albums and send them to: **Snappers Claim to Frame, Walsall Chronicle, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES** or email them to walsallchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk.

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Fresh plans to build luxury homes

A fresh proposal to convert an empty Walsall pub into one of the borough's biggest homes and build other luxurious houses has been submitted.

A previous attempt to transform the former Three Crowns and build another four £1 million mansions around it was rejected by Walsall Council last year. It sparked controversy with more than 30 complaints ahead of the planning committee claiming it was over-development and loss of green belt in Sutton Road. But a new bid has now been submitted.

A plan for the conversion and just three other properties have now been submitted to the authority by Lapworth Architects. Pheasey councillor Adrian Andrew said

neighbouring residents would now be consulted to see if the scheme was favourable.

"We need to speak to the people who are directly affected by the site on a day-to-day basis," he said. "The site has been vandalised, standing derelict and subjected to fly-tipping. We don't want it to be a derelict pub and want to see something happening with it, but which is something residents can support."

A covenant has been put on the former Mitchells & Butlers pub preventing it from being used as a licensed premises again.

A planning statement has been submitted by architect Michael Lapworth in support of converting the derelict pub site.

He says: "Obviously the best way to preserve this landmark building is to put it into some use."

The proposed properties would have up to six bedrooms with games rooms, cinema and gym facilities.

The Three Crowns building dates back to the 1930s and closed as a pub more than three years ago.

Walsall Civic Society were among those to complain about the scheme when it went before councillors last December over encroachment on green belt.

A previous change of use of the pub and minor extensions to form 12 apartments was granted permission subject to conditions in June 2008.

Volunteers are wanted

Volunteers are needed to help expand a service supporting the elderly.

Under the Help at Home scheme in Walsall, 100 older and vulnerable people are supported with day-to-day jobs.

Volunteers should be able to spare between eight and 10 hours a week. Call 01922 636038 or visit www.help-at-home.org.uk

Drums at school fair

A bouncy castle, drumming exhibition will be at a Brownhills school fair on June 25.

The event at St James Primary School, Great Charles Street runs from 11am to 1pm. Entry costs 20p per programme and money raised will go to school funds.

Pub comedy

A Walsall pub will hold a comedy night for charity. The event will be held at the Lazy Hill pub, Aldridge, on June 25 from 7pm.

Pub pals swan along to raise funds

A group of friends from a Darlaston pub raised £2,000 for charity by completing a gruelling sponsored walk.

Glyn Jackson, Mick Hill, Gary Allen and Alan Tonks walked 115 miles from Rhyl in Wales back to The Swan.

The fundraisers took four days to complete the challenge, picking up a few hours sleep where they could in pub car parks along the way.

They were joined on the final leg of the challenge from Tong, near Wolverhampton, by 11 other pals from the pub in Victoria Road.

The group have raised at least £2,000 for the Society of Parents of Children with Cancer. Organiser (SPOCC).

Alan Tonks, aged 53 from Darlaston, said: "It is such a good cause and we wanted to raise as much money as possible for them."

"It was a tough challenge but all the lads got through it."

Dave and Pat Causer, who took over The Swan in February, said they were proud of their regulars.

"They've done a fantastic job raising so much money," Mrs Causer said.

"We are all delighted for them. They all worked really hard."



Fundraisers Glyn Jackson, front left, Mick Hill, Gary Allen and Alan Tonks

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REVIEWS

Prodigal son returns to solve dark mystery in compelling thriller

Exile (15)

THIS three-part series by Danny Brocklehurst, shown earlier this year on BBC4, is a compelling blend of family drama and conspiracy thriller.

John Simm is in excellent form as washed up magazine hack Tom Ronstadt, who leaves his luxury flat in London to return to his roots in the grim northern town where he grew up, where his self-sacrificing spinster sister has been caring for his former local journalist father, who is suffering from Alzheimer's Disease.

The son tries to find some kind of redemption by completing an investigation his father was involved in decades earlier, which also has a bearing on the shocking incident which drove father and son apart when Tom was still a teenager.

When it turns out that the man at the centre of dubious goings-on at a local mental hospital some 30 years before is now a council bigwig, Tom finds that he and his family are in danger and, as he continues to delve into the past, discovers horrifying secrets.

Exile is a well-plotted thriller but what really makes it special are the relationships between the characters and the acting, especially from Simm as Tom as he attempts to connect with his father, a superb bewildered performance by Jim Broadbent, through the fog of dementia.

The double disc set also includes a documentary on the series and films about Alzheimer's Disease.



Father and son divided – Jim Broadbent (left) and John Simm in powerful drama-thriller Exile

Season of the Witch (15)

Nicolas Cage and Ron Perlman play two tough medieval knights pitted against the forces of evil in this entertaining, if silly, fantasy-horror romp.

After deserting from the Crusades because they are sickened by the wanton bloodshed (of which they seem the most capable protagonists), they find their homeland devastated by the plague. Then the pair are captured by the authorities but the church gives them one last chance to redeem themselves by escorting a caged young witch – who is blamed for the pestilence – to a remote monastery where the monks are equipped to deal with her magic.

The witch, a bewitching Claire Foy, turns out to have incredible strength and the ability to mess with the minds of the escorting party of knights, priest and forest guide. At first we join Cage's knight in doubting that she is a supernatural creature but once the survivors arrive at the monastery, all bets are off.

This is enjoyable sword and sorcery nonsense with a touch of The Exorcist.

The special effects are good and the dialogue mildly amusing.

Cage gives a typically world-weary performance, only looking mildly irked when confronted with an army of zombie monks. As the priest says: "We're gonna need more holy water!"

Brighton Rock (15)

The idea of updating the story of small time Brighton gangsters from the 1930s to the Mods versus Rockers era of the early 60s sounded a good idea on paper but really adds nothing to Rowan Joffe's remake of the 1947 original, in which Richard Attenborough gave a career best performance as the psychotic young thug Pinkie.

Sam Riley has an air of menace as the juvenile delinquent but is a pale shadow of Attenborough's portrait of evil. Andrea Riseborough, as the awkward young waitress he befriends purely to silence, tries far too hard, to the point where she started to put me in mind of Hi-De-Hi's chalet maid Peggy.

The mods and rockers bits seemed tagged on, like leftovers from Quadrophenia, though Eastbourne makes a decent mock Brighton, looking so seedy that it can't do much for the Sussex resort's tourist industry. There is some heavyweight supporting acting talent, including John Hurt and Helen Mirren, as Pinkie's determined nemesis. But neither are required to go beyond second gear by the mediocre script.

OK, the original Brighton Rock is black and white and made 60 years ago but it remains the far superior movie, check it out instead or save your DVD money to buy a copy of the classic book by Graham Greene.

Leon Burakowski

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THEATRE ROUND-UP

Familiar TV faces and ticket deal for play season

FOR the third consecutive year Ian Dickens Productions return to Wolverhampton Grand Theatre this month to start a four-play summer season.

Familiar faces from television will be among the actors presenting a mixed bill of comedy, drama and a thriller. Theatre fans can pay £48 to see all four plays, a big discount on the total for individual tickets per show.

The season starts on Tuesday with Jack Popplewell's *Busybody*, a comedy about a meddlesome cleaning lady who likes to tell the police how best to go about solving a murder.

It's on to Saturday and the cast features former Coronation Street actress Fiona Shaw (she played hairdresser Maxine), Gemma Bissex (from *EastEnders* and *Hollyoaks*) and Michelle Morris (from *The Knock*).

The clueless detective Inspector Pratt returns, following his outing in *Murdered To Death*, in *Death By Fatal Murder*, from July 5-9. The cast for Peter Gordon's sequel features former *Dirty Den* Leslie Grantham, Richard Gibson (Allo Allo's Herr Flick) and Michelle Hardwick (*The Royal*).

Talented

A frustrated writer takes revenge on a theatre critic in Who Killed 'Agatha' Christie? by Tudor Gates, from July 12-16, featuring *Emmerdale*'s Stephen Rashbrook and *Charmed* actor Neil Roberts.

Nicola Boyce's adaptation of Wilkie Collins' classic Gothic novel *The Woman In White* is staged from July 19-23. Peter Amory (*Emmerdale* villain Chris Tate) and Grange Hill's Karen Ford star.

Forthcoming one-night concerts at the Grand include talented tenor Jonathan Ansell and Friends on Monday. The ex-leader of the 'opera' group will be joined by How Do You Solve A Problem Like Maria? finalist Helena Blackman, West End performer Oliver Taheri and former Only Men Aloud singer Thomas Oliver.

Expect G4 hits including *Somebody To Love* and *Nessum Dorma* at the Monday night concert. Tickets cost from £24.50 to £29.50. Contact the Grand box office on 01902 429212.



Linda Lusardi and Sam Kane promote the Grand panto

Hi ho! Couple happy to be back in city for panto

PANTOMIME stars Linda Lusardi and Sam Kane will grace the Grand stage together after more than a decade.

The celebrity duo officially launched this year's production of *Snow White* and the Seven Dwarfs in a visit to the "special" city.

While ex-glamour model Linda returns as the Wicked Queen, Sam, who is also directing this year's show, will appear as the Prince.

The real-life married couple, who last performed together at the Grand Theatre for panto Robin Hood in 1998, will be joined by comedy act The Grumbleweeds playing *Muddles and Chambers* and West End and former X factor star Niki Evans, who will join the cast as the fairy.

Sam, who is in his ninth year of directing, has been a stalwart of musical theatre for

many years. He said: "It is really nice to be back, Wolverhampton is a lovely and very special place to us and the audiences here are so enthusiastic. We are yet to cast our seven dwarfs but we are hoping to be able to work with some of the city's rising stars."

"To come back this year is great and we hope to give everybody a sensational Christmas show."

Stunts

Linda, who will be seen flying, without wires, said she is looking forward to adapting herself to the Wicked Witch and performing the risky stunts.

"I love this character because it shows a completely different side to me and it's a role I can really get my teeth into," she said.

"The Wolverhampton audiences really know how to enjoy themselves so it's going

to be another great season for us and I am really looking forward to flying in some amazing scenes."

The duo are no strangers to the city after collectively appearing six times at the Grand Theatre over the years.

They have already started preparing themselves for the show which sees them perform twice a day for six weeks. Rehearsals are due to start just two weeks before the curtain is lifted.

Pantomime producers Qdos Entertainment have also announced they will hold open auditions at the Grand Theatre, on Saturday, August 13, to cast 14 youngsters to play two teams of the seven dwarfs. Details will be announced next month. *Snow White* and the Seven Dwarfs will run from Saturday, December 10 until Sunday, January 22.

Reviews

Thomas and Friends Live Grand Theatre

Cheers of delight and smiling faces greeted Thomas the Tank at The Grand as he saves the day by being really useful when the circus comes to Sodor.

Children, mums and dads, grandmas and granddads all joined in as they clapped and sang along to catchy children's songs. Lively and full of colour their attention was immediately captured thanks to the enthusiasm of the cast. Finn, my three-year-old grandson's face was a picture when Thomas came chugging onto the stage with his wide-open eyes.

The three engines Thomas, Percy and James were able to move freely around the stage, joining in with the fun were The Fat Controller, Harold The Helicopter, circus acts and farmyard animals. What a wonderful show to introduce young children to live theatre.

LES JOWETT

Footloose, Grand Theatre

Well I felt exhausted just watching. When they call this a high energy show they are not exaggerating. This was more breathless than *Footloose* and it was riveting.

The show literally explodes on to the stage at Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre and with classic 80s anthems like *Holdin' Out For A Hero*, *Let's Hear It For The Boy* and *Almost Paradise* there was plenty to sing along with.

Footloose, starring Steven Pinder as Reverend Shaw Moore and Adam Booth as Ren, comes complete with electrifying dance routines and everyone was up on their feet at the end of the night. But don't be fooled into thinking this is just a dance show, the singing is also terrific, in particular from the Reverend's daughter Ariel, played by Lorna Want, and Rusty (Jodie Jacobs) and of course Adam Booth as Ren.

Footloose tells the story of life in small-town Bomont which is peaceful until city boy, Ren, arrives. Breaking every taboo, Ren brings dance back to the heart of a town held back by the memory of a tragedy. It is based on the hit 80s movie (which launched the careers of Kevin Bacon, Sarah Jessica Parker and John Lithgow).

Footloose has become a stage musical phenomenon, from Broadway to the West End and touring across the UK. Dancing may have been against the law in *Footloose* but with this show it would be a crime to miss it. It runs until Saturday (25).

SUE ATTWATER

Ravi Shankar Birmingham Symphony Hall

The term legend is often overused but when a 91-year-old gets a standing ovation for merely walking on stage you know it is a fitting superlative.

Believe it or not Ravi Shankar has entered his 10th decade and the sage-like master of the sitar commands respect from his protégés as much as he does from his audience. This fact made it all the more surprising that the Symphony Hall was less than half full.

His evening of ragas, which is a musical form dating back around 2,000 years and has its roots in sacred music of the Hindu faith, was as you would expect spiritual, enjoyable and full of intricate musical notations which were executed with the precision of a master who has been playing music for more than 80 years. Surrounded by a mixture of his pupils and other respected Indian musicians you felt privileged, almost as if you were sitting in on a masterclass where Shankar was both passing on his wisdom and overseeing the finer details of his followers' progress.

If you want to see a true legend in action then go and see Shankar.

DANNY FARRAGHER

Ringo Starr and his All Starr Band Birmingham Symphony Hall

Oh come on. Yes, of course it was very Butlins Holiday Camp at times, but what were you expecting, for goodness sake? This is Ringo.

Now, you might say there are two types of performer in the world of popular music: the artist (such as Bob Dylan) and the entertainer (such as Engelbert Humperdinck). Ringo Starr has never once professed to be an artist, but he has never stopped being an entertainer. And entertain is what he did supremely well.

"If you don't know this next song, you're in the wrong venue," he told the crowd as he launched, inevitably, into *Yellow Submarine*, the daft, throwaway children's song from the greatest group of them all, and the track with which Starr will forever be associated. Surrounded by top-notch (if ancient) musicians (all of whom were major players in their time), Ringo - a sprightly 70 years of age - gave us energetic renditions of *Honey Don't*, *Back Off Boogaloo*, *Photograph*, and of course *With A Little Help From My Friends*.

Starr has suffered over the years at the hands of critics who expected him to be creative like John, Paul and George. As if having three outstanding songwriters in one band was not enough. But it turns out the mop-top caricatures of John the thinker, Paul the romantic, George the mystic and Ringo the clown were pretty accurate after all. At the Symphony Hall he proved he was still the clown, the master entertainer, and actually, a much better drummer than many give him credit for. Ringo... don't listen to the cynics. You're fab.

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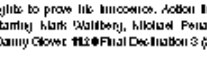


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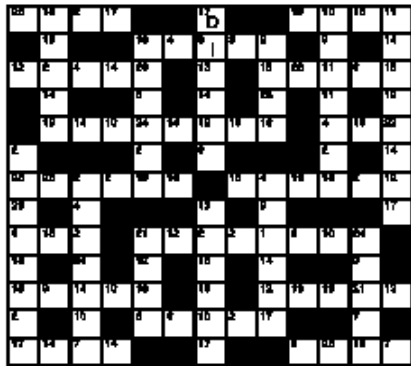



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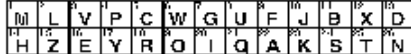
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Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



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Double Crossword

Choose either the quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

Cryptic Clues:

Across

7. He broke all the commandments (5)
8. A measure of space and time (7)
9. In a common use of the word (7)
10. Medicine bottle? (5)
12. Agree to keep in touch (10)
15. A beauty ultimately recognised after years of relative neglect (10)
18. Country gives a false document (5)
19. Result of converting sea into land (7)
21. Hide in the South Indian part of a Mediterranean side (7)
22. Share the soup (5)

Down

1. They call for patient driving (10)
2. Requested a different desk (5)
3. In the French description of Britain (4)
4. Possibly cares about a famous Roman (6)
5. Suggestion to give a hand? (8)
6. Necessary being collected? (8)
11. Create shade, body and turn aside (4)
13. It would be a pleasure to sing Heron's boyfriend (8)
14. Looking out for a situation for the hands? (8)
16. Side number? (6)
17. This Jack has three cresses in beard (5)
20. One way win it by a head (4)

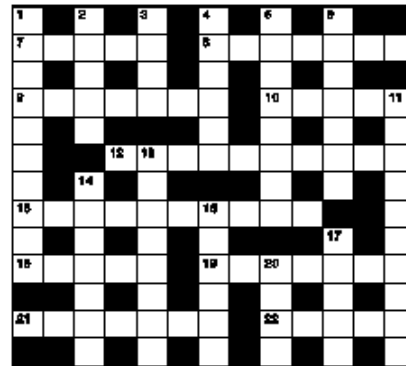
Quick Clues:

Across

7. Join (5)
8. Game in (7)
9. Serious (7)
10. Spikes (5)
12. Confused light (4)
15. Invidious (10)
18. Hebut (5)
19. Companion (7)
21. Related (7)
22. Heddy (5)

Down

1. Replaces (10)
2. Harming (5)
3. In this place (4)
4. Ball (6)
5. Be conspicuous (5)
6. Advent (7)
11. Anxiety (10)
13. Cades (8)
14. Amaze (7)
16. Reconnection (6)
17. Object (5)
20. Simple (4)



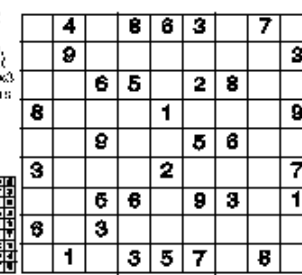
LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

CRYPTIC - Across: 1. Tenacious, 2. Pious, 3. London, 4. Time, 5. Confused, 6. Ties, 7. Join, 8. Game in, 9. Serious, 10. Spikes, 11. Anxiety, 12. Confused, 13. Cades, 14. Amaze, 15. Invidious, 16. Reconnection, 17. Object, 18. Hebut, 19. Companion, 20. Simple, 21. Related, 22. Heddy. Down: 1. Replaces, 2. Harming, 3. In this place, 4. Ball, 5. Be conspicuous, 6. Advent, 7. Anxiety, 8. Cades, 9. Serious, 10. Spikes, 11. Anxiety, 12. Confused, 13. Cades, 14. Amaze, 15. Invidious, 16. Reconnection, 17. Object, 18. Hebut, 19. Companion, 20. Simple, 21. Related, 22. Heddy.

Sudoku

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:



Circlegram

Replace the question mark with a letter so that the letters within each circle can be arranged to form words on a common theme. What are the three words, and the letter represented by the question mark?

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:
The letter represented by the question mark is A. Common words are: GARDEN, KNOT, and JAZZ.



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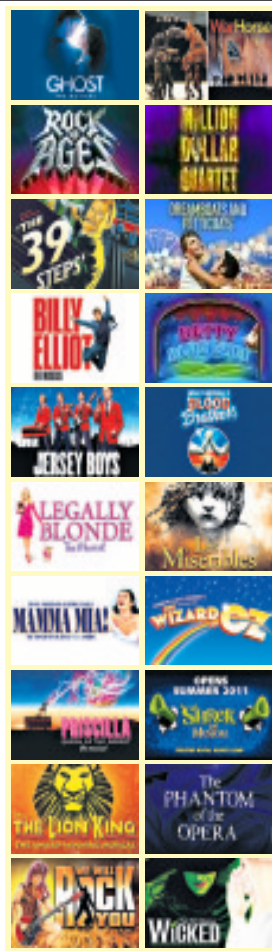
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thechronicle

Closing school has £500,000 over

A Bloxwich secondary due to close for good this summer is expected to end with a surplus close to £500,000.

Sneyd Community School will close on August 31 before the site reopens as a University Technical College in September.

The money will then be distributed through all of the other schools in the borough via the Schools Forum.

However, Brownhills Technology College, which has picked up most of the fallout from the closure of Sneyd, had appealed for it to be reinvested in its budget.

Brownhills has taken on more Sneyd pupils than any other local school.

Staff received no extra cash for the

majority of the pupils, with the school left to foot huge transport bills, such as £24,000 on coaches. Brownhills headteacher Helen Keenan said she would have liked to have seen the money reinvested in her school.

"I would like to see transparency on where this money will be spent throughout the schools. We have taken on 63 youngsters, who are now happy and settled in, and the staff have worked extremely hard.

"But because of where we are geographically we were left with large transport costs and received no financial help," she said.

Mrs Keenan added she believed this to

be a special case and had pointed that out to the Schools Forum.

However, Walsall Children's Services Serco, which manages education in Walsall, said the money would have to go through the forum.

Spokeswoman Claire Clews said: "The amount of money a school receives is mostly dependent on the number of children there on school census day in January each year.

"Thus any school that gets an influx of children will receive the money for those children subsequently. This is normal practice. Brownhills School asked the Schools Forum for special consideration but this was not agreed."

Richard off on trip

A pensioner who is taking on his second round-the-country trip using his bus pass will set off on July 8.

Richard Worrall, ex mayor, will be joined by Dennis Roberts, aged 66, of Bradley and 81-year-old John Breeze, of Cannock, after an appeal for companions.

The 66-year-old, of Burrowes Street, Birchills, will be raising cash for the Bryntysilio Outdoor Centre.

Man died of heart failure

A wife found her husband dead in their home, an inquest heard.

Roy Hartop, aged 58, of Bilston Lane, Willenhall, died on April 20. At the inquest at Walsall Manor Hospital, Dr Iqbal Dhesi, who carried out a post mortem, said he believed the death was caused by heart failure.

Black Country assistant deputy coroner Clive Loyns recorded a verdict of death by natural causes.

Disco cash gives a boost to hospice

Community-spirited party-goers danced the night away for a good cause at a fundraising disco to help raise cash for St Giles Walsall Hospice.

The evening at the Corpus Christi Social Club in Ashmore Park, Wolverhampton, raised more than £300 for the charity after revellers arrived in fancy dress to take to the dance floor.

The disco was hosted by staff from Walsall's Dorothy Pattison Hospital who presented the proceeds to the hospice at the hospital.

Pauline Cliff, hospital administrator, organised the festivities with colleagues Leanne Morley and Bob Cliff.

She said: "We'd been to a disco at the Corpus Christi club to celebrate Bob's 60th birthday, and had such a great time that we wanted to do it all again.

"We were delighted to raise a total of £301.29 for the hospice."

Rachel Ridler, fundraising assistant for St Giles Walsall Hospice, said: "We'd like to say a big thank you.

"It's thanks to fabulous fundraising events such as these that we've been able to realise our dream of finally opening our dedicated St Giles Walsall Hospice facility for the Walsall community."



Handing over the cheque from Dorothy Pattison Hospital are Pauline Cliff, Leanne Morley and Bob Cliff with fundraiser for the hospice Rachel Ridler

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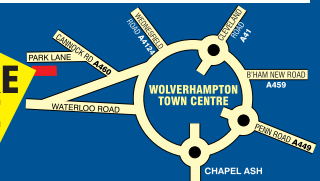
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The top property guide for Walsall, Brownhills, Aldridge, Willenhall and Bloxwich

Family home in a convenient place

Conveniently positioned for Walsall, Wolverhampton and Cannock, this three-bed home had open viewing at the weekend.

Situated in a popular and much requested location along Sneyd Lane, Essington, this traditional style bay fronted semi-detached property offers splendidly appointed living accommodation which has been considerably improved by the present owners.

Including gas fired central heating and uPVC double glazed windows, number 70 Sneyd Lane is on the market for offers based on £159,950.

Enhanced

It has been enhanced by the addition of a well-equipped refitted kitchen including oven, hob, refrigerator freezer and washing machine and a superb refitted bathroom which has been repositioned at the front of the property creating a larger third bedroom at the rear.

Having the benefit of two stylish reception rooms with period fireplaces and an established rear garden overlooking local fields the property simply must be viewed internally to be fully appreciated.

Briefly the accommodation is arranged as follows: porch, reception hall, lounge, separate, dining room, kitchen, three bedrooms, bathroom, gardens to front and rear and off-road parking.

For further details call 01902 631151.



This three-bedroom semi-detached in Essington is on the market for offers based on £159,950

Tile style can make a major difference

THE quickest and easiest way to bring about a dramatic transformation, whilst also adding value to your home, is with tiles.

Brighten up that tired kitchen with bright, shiny wall tiles. The latest trend is for bright vibrant colours; they can turn the "engine room" of the season into a high-tech kitchen that even a celebrity chef would be proud of.

With all those people going in and out of your house why not tile the floors that get the most punishment. Kitchen floors that are tiled are hygienic and trouble free and a hall or porch with a tiled floor won't be damaged by dripping broilies, dribbling wellies and muddy dogs.

Bathrooms and cloakrooms are also hard to keep fresh. Tiled floors are easy to keep clean, very smart looking and don't mind if you don't quite shut the shower door. For extra luxury add underfloor heating. It is surprisingly inexpensive and easy to install. You can put floor tiles on most suspended wooden floors – consult a member of The

Tile Association.

And with it being that time of year again everybody is looking for a bargain. Here are a few tips on buying tiles in the sales.

Always buy more tiles than you need. You should slightly over estimate anyway for breakages and cuts but think to the future.

Tiles can last a lifetime and in five years a new bath, a new shower screen or new radiators can leave small gaps. Tiles bought in the sales are unlikely to be available again.

Chessboard

Mix and match. You can buy small quantities of different tiles and create panels, stripes or a chessboard effect.

Choose a bold statement tile and create an accent panel or feature wall using cheaper plain tiles as the background. Choose vibrant metallic or glass borders that aren't in the sale and team with plain coloured tiles from the bargain section. Work your scheme out carefully before you buy and do make sure that the tiles are the same size and thickness. Mosaic tiles come on a mesh background and can be easily cut into strips to make a border of any

width you like. You can team these with large format white tiles for a very stylish bathroom. Buy more of the mosaic and create an accent wall over the bath, in the shower or above the basin with a mirror set in.

Buy decorated tiles and panels for your kitchen and team with cheaper plain tiles. Once again do be sure they are the same size. For a really minimalist look choose white tiles for your kitchen walls and use a bright primary colour just behind the hob.

You can often find plain tiles in size 100x200mm left over from commercial projects. Working it out carefully you can create brick effect, herringbone and basket weave patterns to name just three. The brick effect looks really good in deep colours used half way up a wall in a hall way. Top with a border and a moulding in tile or wood and you have an almost indestructible surface on a wall that gets lots of hard wear.

On floors use the herringbone and basket weave patterns to make plain floor tiles look special.

For more information on using tiles go to www.tiles.org.uk – the website of The Tile Association.



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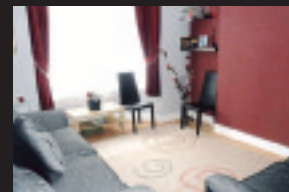
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£109,950



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GUIDE PRICE £125,000



MILCOTE DRIVE - WILLENHALL
A 3 BED DETACHED

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- THE LANDLORD WILL CONSIDER DSS TENANTS WITH GUARANTOR PLEASE CALL FOR DETAILS
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MEYRICK ROAD - WEST BROMWICH
A 3 BED SEMI DETACHED

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- DECKING AREA TO REAR GARDEN WITH GENEROUS SIZE FEATURE POND

£120,000



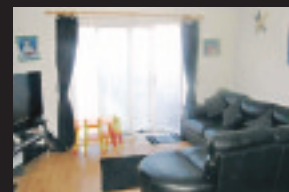
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MILL STREET - DARLASTON
A 2 BED SEMI DETACHED

- THIS PROPERTY IS NEW TO MARKET & WOULD MAKE AN IDEAL FIRST TIME BUY
- VIEWING HIGHLY RECOMMENDED MUST BE SEEN TO BE APPRECIATED
- THE PROPERTY HAS REAR ACCESS WITH OFF ROAD PARKING

£76,000



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PINFOLD STREET - DARLASTON
A TRADITIONAL STYLE 2 BED SEMI DETACHED

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BED SEMI
DETACHED
PROPERTIES
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POPLAR AVENUE - BENTLEY
A 2 BED SEMI DETACHED

- THIS PROPERTY IS NEW TO MARKET & BENEFITS FROM AN EXTENDED KITCHEN
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- NICE FAMILY HOME AND MUST BE SEEN TO BE APPRECIATED

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OFFERS £299,950



CLARKES LANE, WILLENHALL

- Spacious Detached Home
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- Spacious First Floor Flat
- Two Bedrooms
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- ★ Part furnished
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- ★ Kitchen with some appliances
- ★ Garage
- ★ Front & rear garden

£650pcm



COBDEN STREET, DARLASTON, WEDNESBURY

- ★ Fully Refurbished
- ★ Mid Terrace Property
- ★ Two Reception Rooms
- ★ Two Bedrooms & Luxury Bathroom
- ★ Newly Fitted Kitchen With Hob & Oven
- ★ UPVC DG & GCH

£525pcm



INTOWN ROW, WALSALL

- ★ Converted Brewhouse
- ★ Two Bedrooms
- ★ Kitchen & Lounge
- ★ Bathroom & UPVC DG
- ★ Storage Heaters
- ★ Courtyard

£475pcm



LICHFIELD ROAD, WILLENHALL

- ★ Semi-Detached
- ★ Three Bedrooms
- ★ Lounge & Bathroom
- ★ Kitchen/ Dining Room
- ★ GCH & DG
- ★ Garage & Garden

£475pcm



PARKLANDS GARDENS, WALSALL

- ★ Second Floor Flat
- ★ Lounge/Dining Room
- ★ Kitchen
- ★ One Bedroom
- ★ Shower Room
- ★ Storage Heaters

£425pcm



LINGFIELD COURT, WALSALL

- ★ Second Floor Flat
- ★ One Bedroom
- ★ Lounge & Kitchen
- ★ Bathroom
- ★ Storage Heaters
- ★ Double Glazing

£375pcm



KINGS COURT, BRIDGE STREET, WALSALL

- ★ First floor flat
- ★ One bedroom
- ★ Lounge
- ★ Kitchen with hob & oven
- ★ DG & Storage heating
- ★ One parking space

£365pcm



ELM COURT, SUTTON ROAD, WALSALL

- ★ Ground Floor
- ★ One bedroom
- ★ Lounge
- ★ Kitchen
- ★ Bathroom
- ★ Some appliances

£350pcm



HOLDEN CRESCENT, WALSALL

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- ★ Hall, Lounge
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- ★ Storage heaters

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Wednesbury

A three bedroom link detached property in a cul de sac location. Double glazing, central heating, refitted kitchen, 20' garage, conservatory.

£139,950



Wednesbury

A bright and airy two bedroom semi detached house close to local schools and having much to offer a young family. Centrally heated, double glazed, conservatory, garden & off road parking. NO UPWARD CHAIN

£107,500



Wednesbury

A traditional-style two bedroom mid terraced home, within walking distance of Wednesbury town centre, offering well-presented accommodation throughout.

£93,950



Wednesbury

An extended mid town house offering four bedrooms in total with the ground floor accommodation being suitable for disabled access. Partial central heating & double glazing. NO UPWARD CHAIN

£89,950



Darlaston

A nicely presented three bedroom traditional terraced house close to the amenities of Darlaston and available with NO UPWARD CHAIN

£86,950



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West Bromwich

Modern two bedroom first floor apartment in the Hill Top area. Ideal as investment - No upward chain

£60,000



Wednesbury

An exceptional property - Detached four bedroom bungalow, completely refurbished to a high standard and offering versatile accommodation which must be viewed internally.

£230,000



WEDNESBURY

This traditional style two bedroom semi detached property is situated in a popular cul de sac off Woden Road North and is offered for sale with no upward chain. Thought ideal for young professionals being ideally located for access to the motorway network at Junction 9 of M6. The accommodation benefits from majority central heating and double glazing.

£113,000



Wednesbury

A very well presented three bedroom semi on a popular location close to the motorway and local schools. Internal viewing highly recommended.

£140,000



Wednesbury

A three bedroom semi in a popular location ideal for schooling for all ages. Double glazing, central heating, No upward chain

£120,000



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Superior extended five bedroom detached home in a sought after location. Having two reception rooms, large extended dining kitchen, conservatory, new central heating system, a early viewing is recommended.

£229,950



WEDNESBURY

ARUNDEL AVENUE
★ Internal viewing is a must to appreciate the quality and size of the accommodation
★ Centrally heated and double glazed throughout
★ Reception hall, guest w/c, lounge, dining room
★ Conservatory, three bedrooms, family room
★ Private enclosed rear garden
★ Low maintenance landscaped rear garden
★ Off road parking to the fore
★ Garage and off road parking

£179,995



Wednesbury

Traditional three bedroom detached home in quiet cul de sac location. Having the benefit of central heating and being predominantly double glazed. An early viewing is recommended to appreciate the size and accommodation on offer.

£159,950



Wednesbury

Two bedroom semi detached house having through lounge, kitchen, ground floor shower room, secure gated parking, annexe with lounge and bedroom. Double glazed and gas central heated.

£149,950



WEDNESBURY

Immaculate throughout. A two bedroom traditional semi with central heating, double glazing, conservatory and off road parking - A great all round property purchase

£117,950



WEDNESBURY

DARBY ROAD
★ Semi detached house
★ Ideal first time purchase
★ Two bedrooms
★ Recently fitted kitchen
★ Re-fitted first floor bathroom
★ Private enclosed rear garden
★ Off road parking to the fore
★ Viewings via Wednesbury office

£115,000



Wednesbury

This much improved and well proportioned three bedroom home, having re-fitted kitchen and bathroom. Double glazed gas central heating, long rear garden, garage plus off road parking.

£109,950

3 Trees Road, Walsall

This traditionally styled semi detached residence is situated in this popular residential area and benefits from gas fired central heating and double glazing and is in need of improvement and modernisation. Constructed of brick under a pitch tiled roof the property is set back from the road behind a small fore garden and comprises: Enclosed porch, reception hall, front living room, rear lounge, kitchen, guest wc, conservatory, three bedrooms, bathroom, fore and rear garden.

LOT 1

GUIDE PRICE: £75,000-£85,000

5 Roebuck Road, Walsall**LOT 2**

GUIDE PRICE £40,000-£50,000

In need of modernisation and improvement, an ideal investment opportunity to this discerning buyer to let purchaser which offers gas central heating and part double glazing briefly comprises:- Reception Hall, Lounge, Kitchen, Utility Room, Dining Room, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom, Fore and Rear Gardens and Garage.

Bakery Cottage, Sedgeberrow, Near Evesham**LOT 3**

GUIDE PRICE £50,000-£60,000

An interesting property offering a project but with character. Two ground floor rooms, plus bread oven, two bedrooms. In need of modernisation
Viewings: Friday, 10 June 2011 12.00 noon; Friday, 17 June 2011 12.00 noon; Friday, 24 June 2011 12.00 noon; Friday, 1 July 2011 12 noon

38 Hazel Avenue, New Oscott, Sutton Coldfield**LOT 3A**

GUIDE PRICE £50,000-£60,000

First floor maisonette in a popular residential area comprising Entrance Porch, Lounge, Kitchen, Bedroom, Shower Room, Rear garden, Garage.

105 Chepstow Road, Bloxwich**LOT 4**

GUIDE PRICE £50,000-£60,000

This modern mid town house residence has undergone modernisation and improvement and has gas fired central heating and double glazing. Ideally situated to the first time buyer or investor. The accommodation comprises:- Lounge, Kitchen Three Bedrooms, Bathroom, Off Road Parking, Fore and Rear Gardens.

17 Leighswood Road, Aldridge**SOLD PRIOR****LOT 5**

GUIDE PRICE £120,000-£130,000

In need of modernisation, this unusual detached house situated in a particularly central location offers most appealing and characterful accommodation which offers potential. The accommodation includes: Hall, through Lounge, Breakfast/Kitchen, two Bedrooms, Bathroom, separate WC, attractive rear garden and wide frontage with parking.

2 Wigginsmill Road, Wednesbury**LOT 6**

GUIDE PRICE £80,000-£100,000

This 1970 a detached dormer bungalow is situated in a prominent corner position and comprises: Entrance Hall, Lounge, Kitchen, Inner Hallway, Bathroom, Four Bedrooms, Garage, Fore and Rear Gardens

**COMMERCIAL INVESTMENT
King Street Precinct, Darlaston****LOT 7**

GUIDE PRICE £45,000-£55,000

2 single storey lock up shops on a corner plot at the Victoria Road end of the precinct, 36a corner unit currently vacant, 36b currently let at £2340.00 per annum comprising: Shop area, beauty room, kitchen, large store room, w.c. Viewing by appointment

**COMMERCIAL INVESTMENT
Victoria Road, Darlaston****LOT 8**

GUIDE PRICE £45,000-£55,000

Two storey semi-detached shop premises currently let as a sandwich bar at £4680.00 per annum comprising: Ground floor - serving area and food preparation area, First Floor - store room, w.c. Viewing by appointment

38 Norman Road, Walsall**LOT 9**

GUIDE PRICE £190,000-£210,000

Set on a good size plot in a desirable location, this detached family home offers tremendous scope for improvement and comprises:- Reception Hall, Lounge, Dining Room, Kitchen, Utility, Additional Room, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom, Double Garage, Fore and Rear Gardens.

11 Anderson Road, Erdington, Birmingham**LOT 10**

GUIDE PRICE £70,000-£90,000

Two bed mid terraced property comprising:- Vestibule, Hallway, Through Lounge/Dining Room, Kitchen, Two Bedrooms, Bathroom, Rear Garden.

VIEWING DAYS:**17th June, 24th June, 1st July 20th June, 27th June and 4th July**

17 Leighswood Road - 2.00 pm

38 Hazel Avenue - 10.30 am

5 Roebuck Road - 2.30 pm

2 Wigginsmill Road - 11.00 am

105 Chepstow Road - 3.00 pm

11 Anderson Road - 11.00 am

38 Norman Road - 3.30 pm

3 Trees Road - 4.00 pm

Bakery Cottage - 12 noon

17th June, 24th June and 1st July

Date:
7th July 2011, 6pm
Venue: ****NEW VENUE****
Calderfields Golf &
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Road, Aldridge, Walsall

**auCTION
HOUSE****EDWARDS MOORE**

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**7 Queens Parade
Bloxwich
Walsall
WS3 2EX
01922 711444**



**Bealeys Close
Bloxwich**
 ● Four Bedroom Detached
 ● Two Reception Rooms
 ● Breakfast Kitchen
 ● Utility Room
 ● Master Bedroom with En-Suite Shower Room
 ● Jack & Jill En-Suite Shower Room
 ● Family Bathroom
 ● Integral Garage
 ● Off Road Parking
 ● Viewing Essential
In the Region of £279,000



**Skip Lane
Walsall**
 ● Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
 ● Extended Lounge
 ● Kitchen/Utility
 ● Front Driveway
 ● with off Road Parking
 ● Rear Garden with views to fields
 ● Garage
Offers in excess of £249,950



**Fishley Close
Bloxwich**
 ● Five Bedroom Detached
 ● Dining Room
 ● Extended Kitchen
 ● Utility
 ● Cloakroom W.C.
 ● Conservatory
 ● Family Bathroom
 ● Garage
 ● Driveway
Offers in the Region of £229,950



**Stoney Lane
Bloxwich**
 ● Four Bed Detached
 ● Two Reception Rooms
 ● Fitted Kitchen/Utility
 ● Downstairs Shower Room
 ● En-suite Bedroom
 ● Large Driveway
 ● Garage
 ● Landscaped Rear Garden
Offers in excess of £210,000



**Albany Grove
Essington**
 ● Four Bedroom Detached
 ● Two Reception Rooms
 ● Extended Kitchen
 ● Conservatory
 ● Family Bathroom
 ● Front & Rear Gardens
 ● Carport & Garage Driveway
 ● Viewing Essential
Offers in excess of £205,000



**Sandbank
Bloxwich**
 ● Four Bedroom Semi-Detached
 ● Two Reception Rooms
 ● Fitted Kitchen
 ● Utility Room
 ● Downstairs W.C.
 ● Family Bathroom
 ● En-Suite
 ● Period Features
 ● Off Road Parking
In the Region of £199,950



**Lambourn Close
Bloxwich**
 ● Three Bedroom Detached Bungalow
 ● Refurbished Throughout
 ● Lounge
 ● Newly Fitted Kitchen
 ● Newly Fitted Bathroom
 ● Garage & Driveway
 ● Rear Garden
 ● Corner Plot
£199,950



**Revival Street
Bloxwich**
 ● Four Bedroom Detached
 ● Family Bathroom
 ● Lounge / Diner
 ● Cloakroom W.C.
 ● Central Heating
 ● En-suite
 ● Front & Rear Gardens
£199,950



**Victoria Avenue
Bloxwich**
 ● Newly built Three Bedroom Semi-Detached Houses
 ● Fitted Kitchens including appliances
 ● Block Paved Driveway
 ● Master Bedroom with En-Suite
 ● Large Rear Garden
 ● Block Paved Driveway
 ● Integral Garage
In the Region of £179,950



**Stoney Lane
Bloxwich**
 ● Traditional Three Bedroom Semi
 ● Extended to Rear
 ● Extensive Mature Rear Garden
 ● Summerhouse and Barbecue Area
 ● Garage & Ample Driveway Parking
 ● Double Glazing & Gas Central Heating
 ● Two Reception Rooms
 ● Extended Breakfast/Kitchen
 ● NO UPWARD CHAIN
£179,950



**Old Hall Court
Aldridge**
 ● Farmhouse courtyard location
 ● Two Bedrooms
 ● Two Bathroom, Exposed Beams
 ● Views over open countryside
 ● Electric security entry gate
 ● Gas central heating
 ● Double glazing
 ● Feature stone fireplace
 ● Master bedroom with En-Suite shower room
In the Region of £165,000



**Revival Street
Bloxwich**
 ● Two, Three & Four Bedroom Houses
 ● Lounge
 ● Kitchen
 ● Family Bathroom
 ● En-Suite
 ● Cloakroom W.C.
 ● Front & Rear Gardens
 ● Garage
 ● Driveway
£139,950



**Mill Lane
Willenhall**
 ● Three Bedroom Detached
 ● Lounge/Diner
 ● Conservatory
 ● Fitted Kitchen
 ● Family Bathroom
 ● Separate building housing utility
 ● NO UPWARD CHAIN
In the Region of £156,950



**Windrush Close
Pelsall**
 ● Three Storey Three Bed Town House
 ● Fitted Kitchen
 ● En-Suite
 ● Family Bathroom
 ● Separate Garage
 ● Allocated parking
 ● Enclosed Rear Garden
In the Region of £147,950



**Pool Hayes Lane
Willenhall**
 ● Three Bedroom Detached
 ● Two Reception Rooms
 ● Fitted Kitchen
 ● Garage
 ● Driveway
In the Region of £145,000



**Heather Road
Bloxwich**
 ● Four Bedroom Semi
 ● Open Plan Lounge
 ● Play Room/Study
 ● Conservatory
 ● Downstairs W.C.
 ● Block Paved
 ● Driveway
 ● Rear Garden with sunroom
 ● Double Glazing
 ● Central Heating
 ● No Upward Chain
In the Region of £139,950



**Revival Street
Bloxwich**
 ● Two, Three & Four Bedroom Houses
 ● Lounge
 ● Kitchen
 ● Cloakroom W.C.
 ● Family Bathroom
 ● Front & Rear Gardens
 ● Garage
 ● Driveway
£139,950



**Parkview Crescent
Walsall**
 ● Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
 ● Lounge
 ● Kitchen/Diner
 ● Family Bathroom
 ● Gardens
 ● Detached Garage
 ● Block Paved Driveway
In the Region of £134,950



**Field Road
Bloxwich**
 ● Three Bedroom Mid Terrace
 ● New Build 10 year warranty
 ● Fitted Kitchen
 ● Downstairs W.C.
 ● En-Suite
 ● Bathroom
 ● Integral Garage
 ● Rear Garden
In the Region of £124,950 + 5% Gifted Deposit



**Clockmill Mill
Pelsall**
 ● Two Bedroom Semi-Detached
 ● Lounge
 ● Fitted Kitchen
 ● Utility
 ● Central Heating
 ● Double Glazing
Offers in excess of £119,950



**Mulberry Road
Bloxwich**
 ● Three Bedroom End-Terrace
 ● Lounge
 ● Kitchen/Diner
 ● Cloakroom W.C.
 ● Conservatory
 ● Family Bathroom
 ● Front & Rear Gardens
 ● Gas Central Heating
 ● Double Glazing
 ● Viewing Essential
In the Region of £114,950



**Field Road
Bloxwich**
 ● Two Bedroom House
 ● New Build 10 year warranty
 ● Fitted Kitchen with Appliances
 ● Downstairs W.C.
 ● Rear Garden
 ● Parking to Front
In the Region of £104,950 + 5% Gifted Deposit



**Dartmouth Close
Walsall**
 ● Three Bedroom Mid-Terrace
 ● Two Reception Rooms
 ● Separate W.C.
 ● Detached Garage to Rear
 ● Gardens
 ● NO CHAIN
In the Region of £97,500



**Hawthorne Road
Willenhall**
 ● Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
 ● Newly Fitted Kitchen
 ● Newly Fitted Ground Floor
 ● Bathroom
 ● Double Glazing
 ● Gas Central Heating
 ● Front & Rear Gardens
 ● NO CHAIN
In the Region of £97,500



**Tennyson Road
Willenhall**
 ● Three Bedroom End Terrace
 ● Lounge/Diner
 ● Family Bathroom
 ● Rear Garden
 ● Off Road Parking
 ● Double Glazing
 ● Central Heating
Offers in excess of £95,000



**Hollands Road
Bloxwich**
 ● Three Bedroom End-Terrace
 ● Two Reception Rooms
 ● Ground Floor Bathroom
 ● Utility Room
 ● First Floor Family Bathroom
 ● Loft Room
 ● Front & Rear Gardens
 ● Off Road Parking
Offers in excess of £90,000



**Blakenall Lane
Bloxwich**
 ● Three Bedroom Mid-Terrace
 ● Two Reception Rooms
 ● Fitted Kitchen
 ● Ground Floor Bathroom
 ● Front & Rear Gardens
 ● NO CHAIN
In the Region of £89,950



**Ryle Street
Bloxwich**
 ● Three Bedroom End Terrace
 ● Fitted Kitchen
 ● Family Bathroom
 ● Large Rear Garden
 ● Double Glazed
 ● Central Heating
In the Region of £85,000



**Mulberry Place
Bloxwich**
 ● Three Bedroom Terrace Property
 ● Front Reception Room
 ● Lounge
 ● Kitchen
 ● Bathroom
 ● Double Glazing
 ● Gas Central Heating
 ● Front & Rear Gardens
 ● Ideal First Time Buy/Family Home
In the Region of £84,950



**Romsey Way
Bloxwich**
 ● Three Bedroom Terrace
 ● Entrance Hall
 ● Fitted Kitchen
 ● Bathroom
 ● Separate W.C.
 ● Rear Garden
 ● Off Road Parking to Front
In the Region of £84,950



**Shrewsbury Close
Bloxwich**
 ● Three Bedroom Terrace
 ● Double Glazing
 ● Central Heating
 ● Dining Room
 ● Bathroom
 ● Separate W.C.
 ● Quiet Cul-De-Sac location
 ● Enclosed Rear Garden
Offers in excess of £80,000



**Stanier Close
Rushall**
 ● One Bedroom Mid-Terrace
 ● Newly Fitted Kitchen
 ● Integrated Appliances
 ● Double Glazing
 ● Economy Seven Heating
 ● Rear Garden
 ● Allocated Parking
Offers in excess of £80,000



**Littleton Road
New Invention**
 ● Two Bedroom Mid-Terrace
 ● Lounge
 ● Kitchen/Diner
 ● Bathroom
 ● Central Heating
 ● NO CHAIN
In the Region of £79,950



**Lichfield Road
Rushall**
 ● Two Bedrooms
 ● Lounge
 ● Kitchen
 ● Economy Seven Heating
 ● Family Bathroom
 ● Off Road Parking
 ● Communal Gardens
In the Region of £75,000



**Station Street
Bloxwich**
 ● Two Bedrooms
 ● Lounge
 ● Kitchen
 ● Bathroom
 ● Entrance Hall
 ● Secure Entrance
 ● Allocated Parking
 ● Communal Gardens
 ● NO UPWARD CHAIN
In the Region of £65,000



**Mark Court, Arboretum Road
Walsall**
 ● One Bedroom First Floor Flat
 ● Lounge
 ● Kitchen
 ● Bathroom
 ● Gas Central Heating
 ● Communal Grounds
 ● NO CHAIN
In the Region of £64,950

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Chetwynd Close, Brierley, Walsall



3 Bedroom Semi ★ Central Heating ★ Double Glazing
 ★ Re-Fitted Dining Kitchen with Integrated Appliances
 ★ Lounge with Feature Fireplace ★ Fitted Bathroom
 ★ Garage ★ Side Drive ★ Front & Rear Gardens
 OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£125,000**

Darwent Close, Kingfisher Estate, Willenhall



Much improved modern detached house in quiet corner location, gas central heating & upvc double glazing, 3 double bedrooms, re-fitted kitchen with integrated appliances, re-fitted bathroom & en-suite, 20ft through lounge, 12ft sitting room, reception hall, guest w.c., 2 car front drive & large rear garden.
 OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£164,950**

Memorial Close, Willenhall



Well presented modern 3 bedroom detached house, central heating & double glazing, hall, lounge, fitted kitchen diner, fitted bathroom, garage, double drive, front & rear gardens.
 OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£165,000**

Dillows Lane, Willenhall



Extended & much improved 3 bedroom semi-detached benefiting from central heating & double glazing, hall, 25ft through lounge, 13ft dining room, fitted kitchen, re-fitted bathroom, 2 car drive & rear garden.
 OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£134,950**

Pooles Lane, Short Heath, Willenhall



3 Bedroom Semi ★ No Upward Chain ★ Central Heating ★ Double Glazing ★ Entrance Porch ★ Hall, Lounge, Fitted Kitchen ★ Downstairs Fitted Bathroom ★ Verandah ★ Drive ★ Narrow Garage ★ Enclosed Garden
 OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£79,000**

Dillows Lane, Willenhall



Three bedroom semi with gas central heating & double glazing. Convenient for Bilston & Willenhall, accommodation comprises porch, reception hall, through lounge/dining room, kitchen, rear porch, 3 beds, bathroom/w.c., front & rear gardens, single garage.
 OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£97,500**

Dillows Lane, Willenhall



A three bedroom semi detached family home having the benefit of UPVC double glazing, gas central heating and no upward chain. This improved property briefly comprises, reception hall, fitted kitchen, spacious through lounge/diner, 3 bedrooms, family bathroom, front and rear gardens and off road parking.
 OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£109,995**

Clothier Street, Willenhall



Modern 3 bedroom detached house, central heating & double glazing, hall, guest w.c., lounge, dining room, fitted kitchen, fitted bathroom, front & rear gardens, garage.
 OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£149,950**

Clothier Street, Willenhall



A refurbished and upgraded 3 bedroom end of terrace family home having the benefit of UPVC double glazing, gas central heating and no upward chain. This splendid property briefly comprises, lounge with feature fireplace, re-fitted kitchen diner, 3 bedrooms, re-fitted family bathroom, rear garden and off road parking to house VIRTUAL TOUR ON OUR WEBSITE
 OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£99,950**

Apri Close, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton



An immaculately presented, three bedroom detached property having the benefit of UPVC double glazing and gas central heating. This splendid property further comprises reception hallway, guest W.C., lounge, fitted kitchen, integrated garage, first floor bathroom, three bedrooms, front & rear gardens and off road parking to the front.
 OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£149,995**

Ferris Close, Park Hall, Wolverhampton



WOLVERHAMPTON ***GOLDEN JEWEL*** A three bedroom semi detached property having the benefit of UPVC double glazing & gas central heating. The property briefly comprises, reception hall, spacious lounge & fitted kitchen with integrated appliances, dining room, contemporary bathroom, master with en-suite, the back kitchen has gas oven, all of the carpets are brand new, large lawn, front & rear gardens.
 OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£169,995**

Glebe Road, Willenhall



Well presented 3 bedroom semi-detached house benefiting from gas central heating & majority upvc double glazing. Further comprising reception hall, 25ft through lounge, extended fitted kitchen, fitted bathroom, front & rear gardens & garage.
 OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£120,000**

Banks Street, Willenhall



WOLVERHAMPTON ***GOLDEN JEWEL*** A three bedroom semi detached property having the benefit of UPVC double glazing & gas central heating. The property briefly comprises, reception hall, spacious lounge & fitted kitchen with integrated appliances, dining room, contemporary bathroom, master with en-suite, the back kitchen has gas oven, all of the carpets are brand new, large lawn, front & rear gardens.
 OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£189,995**

Princes Road, Willenhall, West Midlands



A four bedroom modern detached family home having the benefit of UPVC double glazing, gas central heating and no upward chain. The property briefly comprises, reception hall, guest W.C., fitted kitchen diner with utility area, lounge, family bathroom, 4 bedrooms, master with en-suite, rear garden, off road parking and garage.
 OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£199,950**

Lowe Avenue, Darlaston



Refurbished, improved and upgraded, three bedroom semi detached family home having the benefit of no upward chain, UPVC double glazing and gas central heating. Ideal for a young family the property briefly comprises, porch, reception hall, fitted kitchen diner, 3 bedrooms, family bathroom with shower, front and rear gardens with 100 sq ft of paved parking. MUST BE VIEWED. VIRTUAL TOUR ON OUR WEBSITE
 OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£70,000**

Laburnum Road, Off Stow Heath Lane, Wolverhampton



A very well presented, upgraded and improved 3 bedroom detached family home having the benefit of UPVC double glazing, gas central heating and quiet location. This splendid property briefly comprises, reception hall, spacious lounge/diner, fitted kitchen, contemporary side covered porch, 3 bedrooms, family bathroom, front and rear gardens, off road parking and garage.
 OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£134,995**

Princess Way, Victoria Mews, Darlaston



A modern 2 bedroom and terrace having the benefit of UPVC double glazing, gas central heating and no upward chain. The property briefly comprises, lounge, fitted kitchen, conservatory, 2 bedrooms, family bathroom, rear garden and parking to the front.
 OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£79,950**

Chiltern Drive, Willenhall



Semi-detached house with no upward chain, 3 double bedrooms, upvc double glazing, majority central heating, alarm, porch, hall, 18ft lounge, 11ft kitchen, re-fitted bathroom, integral garage, drive & rear garden.
 OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£99,950**

Kennedy Crescent, Darlaston



Well Presented 3 Bedroom Semi Detached Home Ideally Located for Bilston & Darlaston Towns with Gas Central Heating & Double Glazing (as specified)
 ★ Reception Hall
 OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 0121 505 3533 **£114,995**

Dorset Road, Darlaston



A Period 3 Bedroom Butt Detached Home Gas Central Heating
 ★ Many Original Features Remain
 ★ No Upward Chain
 OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 0121 505 3533 **£128,495**

Blowick Road South, Willenhall



Luxury 2 bedroom spacious brand new apartments having the benefit of UPVC double and triple glazing, gas central heating and fitted intruder alarm. These splendid larger than average properties briefly comprise, reception hallway, good size lounge, fitted breakfast kitchen, 3 bedrooms (master with en-suite shower room to master), family bathroom and allocated parking spaces.
 OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£75,000**

Victoria Street, Willenhall



A brand new 3 bedroom luxury modern terrace family home, having the benefit of UPVC double glazing, gas central heating, fitted intruder alarm and with no upward chain. These excellent properties briefly comprise, reception hallway, lounge, fitted breakfast kitchen, 3 bedrooms (master with en-suite shower room to master), family bathroom, rear garden and allocated parking spaces to rear.
 OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£99,995**

Evans Street, Portobello, Willenhall



A three bedroom semi detached family home having the benefit of no upward chain, gas central heating and UPVC double glazing. The property briefly comprises, reception hall, lounge, dining room, kitchen, 3 bedrooms, re-fitted family bathroom with shower, front and rear gardens and off road parking to front.
 OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£94,950**

Shoreham Close, Willenhall



EXTENDED & well presented 5 BEDROOM DETACHED house, central heating, upvc double glazing, 18ft lounge, 15ft fitted breakfast kitchen, sun lounge, study, laundry, 2 bathrooms, integral garage, large drive, rear garden.
 OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 01902 633323 **£199,950**

Station Street, Darlaston



A 2 Bedroom Modern Terrace Ideally Located for Walsall & Darlaston Town Centre's
 ★ No Upward Chain
 ★ Ideal Investment Opportunity
 OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 0121 505 3533 **£64,995**

Hall Street East, Darlaston



2 Bedroom Starter Home
 ★ Gas Central Heating & Double Glazing (both where specified)
 ★ Reception Hall
 ★ Lounge with Feature Fireplace
 OFFERS OVER: Viewing: 0121 505 3533 **£75,000**

Forge Road, Wednesbury



Presenting an Extended 2 Bedroom Semi Detached
 ★ Gas Central Heating
 ★ Ideally Located for Access to Darlaston Town Centre
 ★ Reception Hall
 OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 0121 505 3533 **£79,995**

Willenhall Street, Darlaston



A Deceptively Spacious 2 Bedroom Semi Detached
 ★ Gas Central Heating
 ★ Double Glazing (as specified)
 ★ Off Road Parking
 OFFERS AROUND: Viewing: 0121 505 3533 **£114,995**

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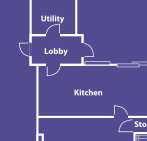
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Kestrel Way

Cheslyn Hay

- Extended & Improved Modern Semi Detached
- Located on Popular Residential Development
- Gas Central Heating & uPVC double glazing
- Front Lounge, Sep Dining Area
- Extended Breakfast Kitchen, 3 Bedrooms
- Bathroom/WC, Single Car Garage
- Block Paved Driveway, Enclosed Rear Garden

Offers in The Region of £154,950



Lichfield Road

Bloxwich

- One of the finest examples of an Edwardian Semi Detached House.
- This property retains many period qualities.
- Vestibule, Minton tiled entrance hall/stairs.
- Three spacious reception rooms, re-fitted kitchen and laundry room.
- Three/four bedrooms, period bathroom/WC
- Block paved driveway and long rear garden with Summerhouse.

Offers in The Region of £249,950



The Nook, Stafford Road

Newtown

- Situated on the Edge of Open Countryside
- Detached Dormer residence Ideal for Extended Families to live under one roof
- Spacious Lounge, Dining Room, Extended Breakfast Kitchen,
- Guest Cloaks/WC, Conservatory, 4 Bedrooms on ground floor
- Family Bathroom/Shower/WC, First Floor Second Lounge
- Split level Master Bedroom/dressing room with Sharps furniture
- Second Bathroom/Shower/WC, Large Tandem Garage or Store
- Ample secure parking and landscaped setting

Offers in The Region of £499,950



SPIRES CROFT

SHARNESHILL

- An immaculately presented and spacious proportioned home
- Gas centrally heated and uPVC double glazed
- Magnificent through lounge leading into conservatory
- Separate dining room, re-fitted 'light oak' breakfast kitchen
- Utility room, study room, guests cloaks/WC, gallery landing
- Loft room, single garage, block paved parking
- Good sized lawned rear garden

Offers in The Region of £349,950



Lichfield Road

Bloxwich

- Has the benefit of a substantial side by side two car garage
- Planning permission in connection with a granny annexe
- Three first floor bedrooms/attic bedroom 4
- 'Nostalgia' bathroom/WC and separate shower room/WC
- Private gardens, Rear vehicular access

Offers in The Region of £265,000



Newton Place

Beechdale, Walsall

- A well presented end town house, ideal starter home or investment
- Gas centrally heated and uPVC double glazed accommodation
- Front lounge, spacious dining room/kitchen
- Two well proportioned bedrooms, modern bathroom/WC
- Private and enclosed large rear garden

Offers in The Region of £87,950



Reedley Road

Sneyd Park, Willenhall

- An extended and much improved modern semi detached house
- Occupying a quiet yet convenient location on this ever popular estate
- Gas centrally heated and uPVC double glazed accommodation
- Front lounge, rear dining kitchen (re-fitted), extended family room
- Three bedrooms, re-fitted bathroom/WC
- Carpeted detached garage, enclosed rear garden
- NO UPWARD CHAIN
- Must View

£145,000



Sneyd Lane

Bloxwich

- A much improved and refurbished, traditionally styled detached house
- Gas centrally heated and uPVC double glazed accommodation
- Two good sized reception rooms, fitted kitchen
- Three bedrooms, and spacious family bathroom/WC
- Loft room, single garage, block paved parking
- Good sized lawned rear garden

Offers in The Region of £164,950



Spring Walk

Walsall

- Occupying a quiet cul-de-sac location
- Gas centrally heated and PVCu double glazed
- Front lounge, full width rear dining kitchen, conservatory
- Three bedrooms, re-fitted bathroom/wc
- single car garage, block paved driveway
- Large rear/side enclosed gardens
- viewing Essential

Offers in The Region of £129,950



The Coppice, Short Heath

Willenhall

- Deceptively Spacious Detached Bungalow
- Quiet Cul-de-sac Location
- Lounge, Separate Dining Room,
- Extended Kitchen 2 Good Bedrooms
- Shower Room/WC, Conservatory
- Single Garage & Off Road Parking

Offers in The Region of £150,995



'The Haven', Selmans Hill

Bloxwich

- Completely refurbished throughout, an immaculate detached home
- Two interconnecting reception rooms, (The rear extended)
- Re-fitted breakfast room/spl level kitchen
- Four excellent bedrooms, master having Juliet balcony & en-suite
- Family bathroom with Jacuzzi bath
- Integral Garage, block paved fore court and planted rear garden
- NO UPWARD CHAIN

Offers in The Region of £229,950



Thompson Street

Willenhall

- A superbly spacious Victorian detached house
- Offering gas central heating and PVCu double glazing
- Three large reception rooms, breakfast kitchen
- Four bedrooms, bathroom/WC
- Carpet and tandem length garage
- Viewing Essential

Offers in The Region of £239,950



Ullswater Road

Coppice Farm, Willenhall

- An immaculately presented modern detached house
- Gas centrally heated and PVCu double glazed
- Front lounge, rear dining room, re-fitted kitchen
- Utility room, Guests cloaks/WC, large conservatory
- Four bedrooms, master having en-suite shower room/WC
- Single car garage, Block paved driveway
- Viewing Essential

Offers in The Region of £219,950



West Street

Leamore

- Family Sized Semi Detached Home
- Gas Central Heating & uPVC Double Glazing
- Two Separate Reception Rooms
- Kitchen with Lobby/WC, Rear Sun Lounge
- 3 Good Sized Bedrooms
- Detached Garage
- MOTIVATED SELLER

Offers in The Region of £84,950



Lichfield Road,

Sheffield

- A unique opportunity has arisen to purchase this fantastic home
- A fully modernised period detached house, together with 2,000 square foot of workshop
- Two reception rooms, further study, breakfast kitchen, utility/WC
- Three bedrooms, bathroom/WC with shower
- Two storey centrally heated workshops with 3 phase electricity
- Conservatory/offices, large vehicular yard and parking area

Reasonable Offers Invited



Franchise Street, Kings Hill

Wednesbury

- A Traditional Victorian End Of Terrace Villa
- Close To All Amenities
- 2 Large Reception Rooms
- Re-fitted Breakfast Kitchen
- Lobby & Bathroom/WC
- 3 Good Sized Bedrooms & re-laid Rear Garden

Offers in The Region of £109,950



Belfry Close, Turnberry Estate

Bloxwich

- Larger Style McLeans Lincoln Detached Home
- Occupying Corner Position
- Guest Cloaks/WC, Spacious Lounge
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- Expensively Re-fitted hand made Kitchen
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- 4 Bedrooms, each with built in wardrobes
- Master with en-suite shower room
- Family Bathroom/WC, Garage

Offers in The Region of 249,950



Tameside Close,

Willenhall

- Large open plan lounge/dining room/kitchen
- 2 good sized bedrooms, main bathroom
- Private enclosed rear garden
- Garage and driveway parking for two vehicles
- NO UPWARD CHAIN

Offers in The Region of £59,950



Andrew drive

Willenhall

- A much improved & re-fitted semi-detached bungalow
- Gas central heating & double glazing
- Spacious Lounge
- Re-fitted kitchen
- Two bedrooms
- Detached garage
- Viewing Essential

Offers in The Region of £124,950



Carnoustie Close

Turnberry

- An immaculately presented and deceptively spacious modern detached bungalow
- Situated in desirable cul-de-sac location with well maintained law & rear private gardens
- Gas centrally heated and uPVC double glazed accommodation
- Large lounge/dining room, re-fitted kitchen with conservatory leading off
- Three bedrooms, the master having a re-fitted shower room/WC
- Family bathroom, single car garage

Offers in The Region of £239,950



Churston Close, Turnberry Estate

Bloxwich

- Fully re-furnished Detached House
- Enjoys Quiet Cul-de-sac location
- Front Lounge, Spacious Re-fitted Dining Kitchen
- Conservatory, Utility Room, Guest Cloaks/WC
- 3 Bedrooms, 2 with built in furniture
- Re-fitted Bathroom/WC, Single Garage
- Fore & Rear Gardens

Offers in The Region of £174,950



Kingfisher Court

Willenhall

- A compact ground floor apartment
- Situated in a modern purpose built block
- An Ideal first time buy or investment opportunity
- Gas centrally heated and uPVC double glazed
- One double bedroom, bathroom/WC
- Large through lounge and open plan kitchenette
- Parking space and communal gardens
- Long Leasehold
- Viewing Essential

Offers in The Region of £69,995



Matlock Close, Lower Farm

Bloxwich

- Well Presented Improved Town House
- Good sized family accommodation
- Close to schools
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Ernest Clark Close, Willenhall

S.S.T.C.
SIMILAR PROPERTIES
REQUIRED

£107,995

Three bedroom mid terrace, lounge diner, breakfast kitchen, bathroom and front and rear gardens. Viewing is strongly advised

Gurnard Close, Willenhall

S.S.T.C.
SIMILAR PROPERTIES
REQUIRED

Offers Over £120,000

Semi-detached on the popular Coppice Farm development. Benefiting from tandem garage, conservatory and having been improved by the current owner.

Riverbank Road, Willenhall

S.S.T.C.
SIMILAR PROPERTIES
REQUIRED

£125,000

A two bedroom, two bathroom semi-detached home. Situated moments from Jct. 10 M6. This would be an ideal first home. Viewing advised



Druid Park Road, Willenhall

S.S.T.C.
SIMILAR PROPERTIES
REQUIRED

£350,000

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Burleigh Close, Willenhall

S.S.T.C.
SIMILAR PROPERTIES
REQUIRED

£165,000

A three/four bedroom semi-detached home. Comprising lounge, study, kitchen diner, conservatory, cloakroom, ensuite, bathroom, garage and driveway.

Holly Close, Short Heath

S.S.T.C.
SIMILAR PROPERTIES
REQUIRED

£125,000

Chain free, cul de sac location, short heath, driveway, guest cloakroom, two reception rooms, access via gate to the rear to the canal

Wayside Gardens, Willenhall



£120,000

Three bedroom semi-detached home off Furzebank Way, drive, garage, lounge, dining room, kitchen, double glazed and central heating. No chain

Fivefields Road, Willenhall



£350,000

Four bedroom detached on an exclusive road in Willenhall. Potential to extend (Subject to planning permission) comprising two reception rooms, kitchen, downstairs toilet, bathroom. No chain

Ravenscroft Road, Willenhall



£242,000

Three bedroom detached home situated on a generous plot, through lounge, fitted kitchen/diner, bathroom, two garages, central heating and double glazing. Viewing essential

Milcote Drive, Willenhall



£180,000

REDUCED

A four bedroom detached home situated on a cul-de-sac comprising lounge, extended family room/kitchen, bathroom, garage and gardens

Trentham Avenue, Willenhall



£110,000

REDUCED

A two bedroom semi-detached home situated on a popular road. Well presented and offering a garage and driveway. For sale with no onward chain.

Barmouth Close, Willenhall



£165,000

NEW

A three bedroom detached home situated in a popular cul-de-sac. Offered to the market with no chain. Lounge, kitchen/diner, bathroom, garage and central heating and double glazing

Lime Avenue, Walsall



£90,000

NEW

Three bedroom terraced home. Extensively improved by its current owner and with the added benefit of two conservatories. Viewing essential. Offered to the market with NO CHAIN

Wolverhampton Road West, Willenhall



£150,000

NEW

Three bedroom semi-detached home situated moments from the Gurdwara. Further loft space, conservatory, extended kitchen, garden summer house and no chain

Ada Wrighton Close, New Invention



£160,000

NEW

Three bedroom link-detached home situated on a cul-de-sac in New Invention comprising downstairs toilet, lounge/diner, conservatory, kitchen, utility, shower room and rear garden. Viewing essential

Mill Lane, Willenhall



£220,000

NEW

A well presented and spacious four bedroom detached residence. Beautiful gardens. Vendor motivated to sell. Viewing recommended

Sandringham Avenue, Willenhall



£105,000

NEW

No chain, semi-detached situated on popular family estate near Pool Hayes school, three bedrooms, in need of some improvement. Two reception rooms, kitchen and bathroom

St. Annes Road, Willenhall



£70,000

NEW

Two bedroom period property. Retaining many original features and offering NO CHAIN. Two reception rooms, kitchen, bathroom, central heating and double glazing

Cannock Road, New Invention



£150,000

REDUCED

Three bedroom semi-detached, lounge, dining room, conservatory, fitted kitchen, bathroom, off road parking and benefiting from central heating and double glazing

Barford Close, Wednesbury



£80,000

REDUCED

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Home of Property Get a move on to a new property

Taylor Wimpey West Midlands is celebrating spring with a brand new campaign aimed at getting the region's homeowners on the move.

Get a Move On offers a range of schemes at developments across the West Midlands that provide financial and practical help for buyers on every rung of the ladder.

For first-time purchasers, the leading housebuilder offers assistance with deposits under the Deposit Match and Gifted Deposit schemes, along with Easy Start shared equity and the Family and Friends Advantage investment incentive at selected developments.

Those with a property to sell, meanwhile, can receive help to find a purchaser for their existing home through

the easymover initiative, or let Taylor Wimpey be their cash buyer under the Part Exchange scheme.

Taylor Wimpey has also come up with some top tips to ensure that the all-important move goes as smoothly as possible.

Make a plan Good preparation is the key to success. Make a list of everything that needs to be done well in advance, including organising removals, informing the utility companies that you are moving, having mail redirected and compiling a list of all the organisations that will need to know about your change of address.

Declutter – so many people waste their time and energy packing and unpacking things that they never use.

Moving house is the ideal time for a big spring clean so be ruthless.

Get rid of the kids And pets (just for the day, of course!). Getting your children and animals out from under your feet will help keep moving day as productive and as stress-free as possible, so arrange for a baby-sitter or a pet-sitter to do the honours.

Label everything clearly Ensure that all boxes and items of furniture are clearly labelled so that everything is put in the right room in your new house.

Colour-coding is an effective and easy way of doing this.

If possible, have a floor plan of your new home available to help the removals team.

It's also a good idea to pack the kettle, tea bags, toiletries, and anything else you might need to get your hands on quickly, in a separate box. Further information is available by calling 0121 703 3400 or visiting www.taylorwimpey.co.uk

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Volvo eco car crosses Europe on a single tank

A silver Volvo V60 station wagon is shown from a front-three-quarter view. The car is parked on a light blue surface. The license plate is 'AK60 PSU'. The Volvo logo is visible on the front grille. The car has a sleek, modern design with alloy wheels and a roof rack.

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Mini's moguls hatch a diesel plan



Compact dimensions distinguish the hatchback

IN LITTLE more than a decade, Mini has gone from producing one car to offering buyers a wide range of equally attractive models. So much so, that company executives are keen to stress that Mini isn't a car but a brand.

Alongside the continual tweaking of the technology behind the cars, expansion appears to be the main game at Mini. So much so, that there's something for everyone – well, almost.

Until now a hot diesel variant wasn't really an option. That's in contrast to the John Cooper Works sub-brand, which offered a heady mix of hot hatch enjoyment from a highly-tuned turbo petrol motor.

The Cooper SD moniker is, according to company bosses, the diesel equivalent and it's not restricted to just the three-door hatch: convertible, Clubman and Countryman can be selected with the all-alloy 143bhp, 2.0-litre turbo engine.

For now it's probably best to focus attention on the Cooper SD hatch. It's more likely to be chosen by converted petrolheads than the other models thanks to its compact dimensions and better agility.

If you think 143 horsepower is a bit stingy in the world of 200-plus horsepower hatchbacks, remember that because it's a diesel the Cooper SD packs a substantial torque punch – 225lb ft of the stuff, which is more than the petrol JCW models.

In practice that contributes to the car's extremely flexible nature: you can trickle around town with ease yet be ready for a quick burst of acceleration in an instant.

Package

Motorway cruising is also a straightforward experience, as cruising in a high gear at low revs is not only kind on the ears but also good for your wallet.

Mini, and parent company BMW, have been enthusiastic proponents of fuel-saving technology in recent years, so it's no surprise to learn that the Cooper SD models come with the now familiar package of engine stop-start and brake energy recovery systems.

Over the course of the car's life you can expect to make modest but valuable savings, while the on-paper figures for the hatch (65.7mpg, 114g/km CO2) show how far the industry has come in a few short years.

With such impressive figures it's easy to lose sight of the Cooper SD's performance potential.

Holding on to a gear for longer or pushing harder on the throttle soon makes you forget about green motoring, though.

For all the JCW references, in reality the Cooper SD has more in common with the petrol-powered Cooper S when it comes to set-up. More forgiving than Mini's flagship hot model, the Cooper SD's ride is on the right side of firm – corners can be confidently attacked with considerable enthusiasm, while poorly-surfaced roads won't have your fillings falling out of your mouth.

You sit low down in the Cooper SD, which adds to the theatre of the performance experience, and the car's responsive steering allows you to make precise inputs with confi-

dence. Combined with the slick manual gearshift – an auto box is optional – and the well-spaced pedals, all the ingredients are present to deliver an engaging time behind the wheel.

For anyone still not convinced by the concept of a diesel hot hatch, the Cooper SD is a car that's likely to change some minds. By its very nature it doesn't emulate the screaming, rev-happy character of a petrol rival, but you can reach similar speeds having exerted considerably less effort.

The 2.0-litre diesel engine positively gushes torque from low down the rev range, and makes accelerating and maintaining a brisk pace extremely easy.

So much so that fewer gearchanges are needed, but more attention has to be paid to the speedometer for obvious reasons.

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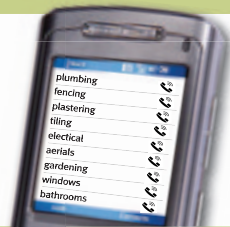
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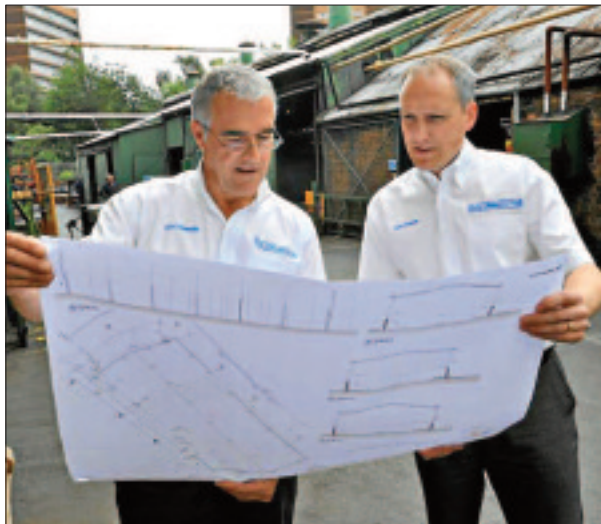


An alloy component for the motor sport industry



The works as they would have been in the 1880s

Family firm investing in future as well as the past



Managing director John Tildesley and sales and marketing manager John Robbins

It has been at the heart of the Black Country for more than 130 years and now an historic family firm is investing more than £1 million during a transformation.

Forging company WH Tildesley originally started out in blacksmithing and engineering when it was launched in Willenhall in the 1870s.

But it has built up a reputation in the forgings and pressings industry with links to Europe and America. Among the industries the company provides parts for are aerospace, oil and autosport. The substantial revamp at Clifford Works Ltd in Bow Street includes refurbishment work with new

hammers and replacement of the main forge building. It is due to begin later this year and expected to be completed next summer. The aim is to create more space and better sound-proofing in more modern surroundings.

walsallchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

Design

Technology has already been incorporated in the tool room where computer-aided design and 3D modelling equipment is in place to help with the die-making process.

Turnover has increased by around 20 per cent over the last 12 months as WH Tildesley has benefited from a resurgence in manufacturing. A total of 46 staff are based at the landmark firm which plans to encourage



Worker Stephen Finch preparing boiler caps in the forge at WH Tildesley

modern apprentices following the scheme.

Up to eight positions could be created to add to the existing mix of skilled forging teams, machine shop technicians, administration department and the management team.

Current managing director John Tildesley is the fourth generation of the family to take over the reins and has been in the role for six years.

He said: "This is the single biggest investment this company has ever made and in the current climate shows our confidence in the future of the company."

Rebuilding the forge has the advantages of bringing the latest technology into the building."

David Tildesley succeeded his father after the Second World War and the business began to invest in new equipment. He was succeeded by his son Richard in the early 1980s then in turn his brother John.

Members of Walsall Council's planning committee have given the go-ahead to the project.

The new larger forge will be built over the top of the existing building to ensure work continues during the transformation. It will then become the main forge.

Succeeded

Skateboard fun at 102, now the birthday girl tries out a C5 trike but is not impressed

Born 105 years ago, Madge Hart admits she is still game for a laugh – not to mention the odd challenge of riding a Sinclair C5 trike. JOHN NASH meets this remarkable birthday girl

WHEN Madge Hart was 102 her grandchildren persuaded her to try her hand at skateboarding, so it was no surprise that when she celebrated her 105th birthday on Saturday she agreed to try out an unusual trike which made the headlines in the mid-80s – for all the wrong reasons.

Braving the showers, Madge took the seat of inventor Clive Sinclair's ill-fated C5 and gave a thumbs-up before declaring: "I've never learned to drive. Where's the steering wheel? What makes it go?"

Like the thousands who ridiculed the eco-friendly invention at the time of its launch, she thought that "perhaps a proper car would be more suitable" and the sherry-a-day resident of a Halesowen old people's home picked up her stick and promptly headed indoors out of the rain.

"I had lessons, you know, and loved driving. But the examiner failed me for driving up to junctions too fast. He didn't appreciate the way I drove, even though my husband said I was a good driver. I was a good driver," she insisted.

Madge, who marked her special day with 30 family and friends at a party at Lapal House Residential Home, in Lapal Lane South, admits she's still game for a laugh "even though I cannot do all the things I used to".

In the past when her eyesight was keener, she would not shy away from the odd game of pool and was well-known for her sharp humour.

Memories

Born when King Edward VII was on the throne, Madge moved into the home last August from her house in Castle Road West, Oldbury, and has fond memories of her home town of neighbouring Bearwood.

"Bearwood was quite a nice place and I remember as a girl growing up there with mum and dad. It was different altogether than today and no one ever had to go into Birmingham to shop. You could get it all in Bearwood High Street, groceries,

clothes – everything you needed. "We had no electricity and had to make do with gas lights, but in many ways it was not that different than things are today. People were still as busy, we had our problems with two world wars and families struggled just as they do now. Of course we didn't have the modern conveniences.

"People knew each other and helped each other more and it was a better community we lived in," she said. She loved attending Bearwood Road School and clearly remembers one incident which landed her in big trouble with her mother.

"My mother dressed me in a white dress and it was new.

"I was instructed to take care . . . but the girl who sat at the back of me in class must have been jealous. "We had ink wells and pens to dip in them. Before the lesson was fin-



Cheers – it's a sherry a day for Madge



Right on cue – Madge eyes up the ball in a family pool challenge

'Proper car' please as Madge hits 105



Flash-back to the skateboarding fun with Max and Ross Hart at Madge's 102nd birthday

ished she had made sure I had ink all down the back of my dress and it was ruined. I was in such a lot of

trouble," she said. Raised with four brothers, Don, Albert, Cecil and Ken, she is keen to point out she was never spoilt as the only girl.

"Spoilt? Never! We were all treated the same and I had to get a job the same as my brothers," she said.

On leaving school at 14, Madge worked for Wesley & General Assurance in Birmingham for 10 shillings a week (50p) and enjoyed her hobbies of knitting and sewing.

Resign

She married her childhood sweetheart, Harold, in Bearwood in 1929 and was promptly told by her bosses she would have to resign from the firm.

"They didn't employ married women. It was policy, not like it is now," she said.

"I met Harold at school when I was about 10 or 12 and there was

never anyone else for me. I enjoyed my job and rose through the ranks, but I was happy to leave to marry Harold. It was well worth it. I had a good life with him.

"I was just a little girl when the First World War broke out but it didn't seem to bother us as children, but by the time the Second World War started I was a full-time mother and housewife and it was very different for me.

"It was a constant worry," she recalled.

"Harold was called up and served as a captain in the Royal Artillery before becoming a teacher at the school where we met.

"It was a time of austerity but we were happy and I had four children, Alan, Michael, Janet and Norman," she added.

Born in Ethel Street, Bearwood, Madge has spent most of her years close to the Black Country except for

a short time in the 1930s when she lived in Gloucestershire where she took up singing in a choir.

During the 50s and 60s she was an active charity worker with the Women's Royal Voluntary Service (WRVS).

She has 11 grandchildren and 13 great grandchildren, enjoys her daily tipples and regular letters from brother, Don – now aged 100.

Remarkable

And the secret of her happy 105 years?

"Plain living, enjoying a quiet life and having a lovely family."

Proprietor of Lapal House, Tony Billingham, said: "She's absolutely remarkable and has a great sense of fun about her."

"I recall when she arrived here, she got out of the car unaided and walked up the steps just using a stick. Incredible."



A new challenge at 105 – birthday girl Madge Hart tries the Sinclair C5, but it fails to impress

SPORT
CRICKET

Rushall's first team give a steady performance to win

RUSHALL 1ST XI 152 FOR 5 WKTS BEAT HIGHCROFT AND GREAT BARR UNITY 1ST XI 65 ALL OUT BY 87 RUNS

After losing the toss and being invited to bat Rushall made steady progress through openers Ian Clayton and Del King.

Highcroft opted for the threat of spin early in the innings with Chandler and Zubair keeping check on the Rushall total with some accurate bowling.

Del King being first out for 22 but helping to put on 59 on for the first wicket.

Rushall continued to make steady progress committed not to give cheap wickets against the restrictive bowling of Zubair in particular.

Ian Clayton went on to top score with a fine 48 with Matt Merrick 33 not out also showing good gritty form.

This allowed Rushall to close on 152 for 5 and at lunch contem-

plating whether their total was sufficient.

However they need not have worried as Rushall's bowlers made light work of Highcroft's batters dismissing them for a paltry 65 all out.

Alan Dunn picked up 3 for 24 but Highcroft's chief destroyer was Russ Coward with 6 for 27 from 10 overs. This was a much pleasing victory which included a couple of fine catches as well.

CANNOCK 3RD XI 241 FOR 7 WKTS BEAT RUSHALL 3RD XI 129 ALL OUT BY 112 RUNS

Despite this comprehensive defeat Rushall's 3rd XI played their part in an entertaining game with some good individual performances.

Cannock compiled a daunting score of 241 with Conor Shingler to score with 47.

For Rushall's bowlers Chris

Hall again impressed with 3 for 39 and ex Cannock player Andy Micklewright also enjoyed his three for 59.

In reply Rushall were well placed after a fine start from openers Shaun Allsopp 43 and Mark Everall 32.

However, the Rushall openers early promise could not be maintained as Rushall slipped to a disappointing 129 all out.

Only Mohammed Arshad troubling the scorers to any degree with 18 runs.

● Rushall Cricket Club have been given a boost with a £10,000 grant from the Highfield Trust.

The cash will be used to install security fencing and netting for stopping balls.

The club will be staging a presentation on Tuesday June 28 at 10.30am where the Highfield Trust will be presenting a cheque to the club's first XI captain.

SPEEDWAY

Battling Wolves dig in to keep cup hopes alive

EASTBOURNE 50 WOLVES 40 (Knockout Cup quarter-final first leg)

A sterling rear-guard action from Wolves' middle and lower order has kept their Knockout Cup hopes alive.

A 10-point defeat at the home of powerful Eastbourne on Saturday leaves everything to play for in the return on July 25.

Indeed, so delicately poised is the tie that Fredrik Lindgren fears the margin may be just too much. Peter Karlsson thinks it's right in the balance and team boss Peter Adams is confident Wolves will win.

The visitors could have been even closer but for a startling display in the home reserve berth by Lukas Dryml, who dropped just one point in seven rides.

Dryml rode particularly well, albeit aided by several strokes of fortune. His heat one roller went unnoticed; he was almost wiped out by the eccentric and barely controlled progress of partner Lewis Bridger in the seventh race and trailed Ty Proctor in the eighth before it was stopped due to Simon Gustafsson's fall.

The speedway gods frequently decree that in such circumstances the fallen rider's partner wins at the second attempt. The lengthy rain break that preceded the re-run also helped.

It gave the Eagles' track staff plenty of time to lavish the most scrupulous attention to grading and preparing Dryml's inside starting gate while the Wolves lanes went curiously neglected.

Dryml looked like going through the card although Karlsson – the two did not meet – might have had something to say about that. Instead, the Eagle's colours were lowered only by Ludvig Lindgren who showed total commitment on a sawdust-strewn surface to blast his way to the front on the first two bends of heat 10.

Proctor fired his way inside Bridger to win the next, and with Fredrik Lindgren third Wolves had edged their way back to within two points.

But with the elder Lindgren struggling they conceded a 5-1 in the 13th when Karlsson took too wide a line out of the start.

Tai Woffinden can normally be relied upon to take care of the penultimate race, but Arlington is arguably his least favourite circuit – he tried to give Dryml a big shove in the seventh, and missed – and Wolves were grateful to Ricky Wells for splitting the home pair.

At 10 points down going into the last, the visitors desperately needed at least

parity and duly got it when Karlsson raced home.

Fredrik Lindgren had the door shut on him twice by Bjarne Pedersen when trying the outside line, and threw everything into a last-bend plunge up the inside.

Disqualified

Pedersen finished in the fence and Lindgren was disqualified but he, like the rest of the team, may yet have plenty to say in the return.

Wolves star Fredrik Lindgren has admitted he made contact with Eastbourne's Bjarne Pedersen in their last-heat tussle at Arlington.

Lindgren dived up the inside going into the last corner as he fought to drag back the home side's 10-point advantage, but sent the Dane sprawling.

"It was one or the other. I had to go for it," he said. "He closed me twice on the outside when I came out of the corner."

"He did the same on the last lap and I decided to go on the inside instead. I did catch him a little bit, not too much."

Lindgren fears the 10-point margin may prove "a few too many" for the second leg, but said: "Ten points is a lot of points, but it's possible if we have a really good evening in Wolverhampton."

However skipper Peter Karlsson, who won that final race, said: "We are within striking range, I think. We wouldn't like to have it any more, for certain, and possibly a bit less!"

"But a good start to the meeting at home and we'll be going, I think."



Peter Karlsson leads Timo Lahti at Eastbourne

GOLF



Val Henwood with her trophy

THE Staffordshire Ladies County Golf Association Bronze Championship will take pride of place at Walsall member Val Henwood's home.

Playing off a handicap of 26, Henwood's net return of 73 was good enough to clinch the medal title at the Broadway venue.

Having beaten 70 other hopefuls from across the region, a delighted Henwood commented: "It's certainly the biggest event I have won. I felt quite relaxed throughout the round and my game just came together on the day. I drove the ball well, chipped reasonably well and made the putts that mattered. I'm very proud of my achievement."

Special mention this week must go to Walsall's scratch team who exacted an emphatic revenge over Sandwell on Sunday.

Having come unstuck 6-2 in the Midlands Scratch League earlier this month, Walsall sent their rivals packing with a 7-1 chastening at Broadway.

The magnificent seven winners for Walsall were: John Whitehouse (4and3), Henry Sheridan Mills (2and1), Lewis Pearce (1 up), George Dukes (4and3), Grant Guffogg (5and3), Dan Sutton (2and1) and James Hateley (1 up).

Losing draw for Bloxwich

BLOXWICH 1ST XI 242 FOR 6 HAWKINS SPORTS 235 FOR 6 LOSING DRAW FOR BLOXWICH.

Bloxwich first team captain Danny King lost the toss this week and the opposition opted for Bloxwich to go into bat.

With the weather on and off it looked to disturb what looked to be a great day of cricket.

Bloxwich had a bad start to the first innings with Batsmen John Ackrill (9), Danny King (4), Pirmjit Singh (10) and Lee Bates

(6). There was superb effort from Thom Fellows (35), Andrew McAree (62 no) and Aaron Allcock (85 no) which helped Bloxwich to reach a great 242 runs for 6 wickets off 48 overs.

The second innings started off well for Bloxwich as they managed to get their first wicket at the beginning of the second over.

There was a great effort in the field from everyone catches from

Aaron Allcock, Pirmjit Singh and wicket keeper Andrew McAree. Bowlers James Lewis, Danny King, John Darby Made a valiant effort and kept the overs ticking over.

There were wickets taken by Lee Bates, Thom Fellows and Aaron Allcock.

Leaving the score at the end of the second innings 235 runs for 6 wickets off 38 overs.

The result at the end of the day was a losing draw to Bloxwich.

NEWS

Free tennis sessions at sports store

As tennis mania sweeps the nation and the country puts its hopes once again on Andy Murray to win his first Grand Slam Wimbledon title Walsall Tennis Club and a sports store has team up to hold two weekends of free tennis at the Wednesbury retailer. This Saturday June 25 and July 2 from 11am to 3pm each day, coaches from Walsall Tennis Club will be holding free tennis taster sessions at the Decathlon store on Gallagher Retail Park, Axletrie Way, Wednesbury, WS10 9QY.

The sessions will be aimed at those aged six to 14 but parents can join in too. Store manager Anthony Kirkwood, said: "For just a few weeks every year tennis is the number one sport in the UK. The Wimbledon fortnight inspires people to take up the sport, but many don't have the right opportunities. By teaming up with Walsall Tennis Club we are able to offer free taster sessions for people to try the sport."

"There's no cost, we will even provide all the equipment, we simply hope that this will encourage more people to pick up a racket and you never know, we could find a future champion."

For more information, contact Decathlon Wednesbury on 0121 502 1065. For more information on Walsall Tennis Club visit www.walsalltennis.co.uk.



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sport

BATTLING WOLVES RIDERS DIG IN TO
KEEP CUP HOPES ALIVE

STEADY PERFORMANCE BY RUSHALL
Page 55



NEW SEASON START IS PERFECT – DEANO

Smith to be speaker at Total event in Lilleshall

walsallchronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

Boss Dean Smith has labelled Walsall's start to the season "perfect" after they were handed an opening-day clash with Leyton Orient.

The Saddlers will host Smith's old club on August 6 in League One after the 2011-12 fixtures were released.

Smith spent 10 years as a player and coach in two spells at Brisbane Road and is relishing the chance to open against Orient.

"It's the perfect fixture for me," he said. "I really wanted a home game to start the season as I think that is very important."

"We finished last season in good form at the Banks's Stadium and we now have the opportunity to carry on where we left off. Obviously Orient are a club I know, so it's worked out well."

The Saddlers then travel to Hartlepool a week later before a midweek trip to Sheffield United on August 16.

Exciting

The visit of Yeovil and a trip to Bournemouth complete the first month and Smith is eager to start his first full season in charge.

"It's a busy but exciting start," he said, with Walsall also hosting Middlesbrough in the Carling Cup first round in the week beginning August 8. "I'd rather go to Hartlepool in August than darkest winter and Sheffield United at Bramall Lane is a game we'll all look forward to."

Walsall host Sheffield Wednesday on Boxing Day before a New Year's Eve clash with Rochdale and a trip to newly-promoted Bury on January 2. Easter sees them host Chesterfield and travel to Charlton and they finish the season with a trip to MK Dons.

Smith added: "The game against Sheffield Wednesday should be a cracker. A home game on Boxing Day against a big club who should bring down a large travelling support is great."

On the opening day in the Premier League on August 13, Albion host champions Manchester United, Wolves go to Blackburn and Villa travel to Fulham. Birmingham face Derby at Pride Park in the Championship on August 6.

Saddlers' boss happy with plum call in Cup

Walsall will host Championship outfit Middlesbrough in the Carling Cup after being handed a plum first-round tie.

The Saddlers will take on Tony Mowbray's side in the week commencing August 8 – just days after the start of the League One season.

Boss Dean Smith said: "It's a very exciting draw. Middlesbrough are a big club, who have spent a number of seasons in the Premier League."

"It will be a tough game but one that we're already looking forward to."

"You can't really ask for much more than a home draw in a cup competition and we've got that."

Leeds host Bradford in a Yorkshire derby while Nottingham Forest host Notts County in another derby clash. Preston play Crewe and Crystal Palace will host the winners of Crawley and AFC Wimbledon – who must play-off for the right to make the first round.

Holders Birmingham have been handed a bye to the third round because of their European commitments.

Full draw: Rochdale v Chesterfield, Port Vale v Huddersfield, Rotherham v Leicester, Hull City v Macclesfield, Hartlepool v Sheffield United, Leeds v Bradford City, Doncaster v Tranmere, Walsall v Middlesbrough, Barnsley v Morecambe, Accrington Stanley v Scunthorpe, Derby v Shrewsbury Town, Oldham v Carlisle, Bury v Coventry, Sheffield Wednesday v Blackpool, Burnley v Burton Albion, Preston v Crewe, Nottingham Forest v Notts County, Brighton v Gillingham, Bournemouth v Dagenham & Redbridge, Ipswich v Northampton, Cheltenham v MK Dons, Bristol Rovers v Watford, Plymouth v Millwall, Oxford v Cardiff, West Ham v Aldershot, Southampton v Torquay, Charlton v Reading, Portsmouth v Barnet, Stevenage v Peterborough, Southend v Leyton Orient, Wycombe v Colchester, Hereford v Brentford, Exeter City v Yeovil Town, Bristol City v Swindon, Crystal Palace v Crawley Town/AFC Wimbledon.

£12m revamp of Alexander nears completion



The shape of things to come – the new running track and

grandstand at the Alexander Stadium



Work goes on with new 5,000-seater grandstand

A £12.2 million upgrade has almost been completed at Birmingham's Alexander Stadium that will see the venue become one of Britain's principal athletics venues.

As well as the creation of a new stand, facilities at the venue have been updated in time for a major competition there next month.

In just over three weeks' time the stadium on Walsall Road will host the Diamond League, with a star-studded line-up of athletes competing in the ninth stop of the premier global series. Around 250 athletes will

descend on the stadium on Sunday, July 10 for four hours of competition.

This is followed by the UK championships later this year and then in 2012 the venue will host the USA track and field team who will spend the five weeks leading up to the London 2012 Olympics training there.

Stadium manager Kevin Levack said: "We knew if we wanted to get the big competitions here we would have to upgrade some of the facilities and one of the main things we had to do was increase the capacity."

Stadium bosses were given



The new control room still under construction

approval by Birmingham City Council to start work on the project in September.

One of the biggest developments is that of a new 5,000 seater grandstand that has been built at the stadium. This has increased overall capacity from 8,000 people to 13,000. Stadium bosses have also had the running track completely redesigned.

Mr Levack said: "The track has been redesigned so it mirrors the track in London for the Olympics. This is now a standard layout which athletes from around the world will be used to, so when they come

here it is familiar to them. This is also something we did so we could encourage competitions like the Diamond League to the stadium."

The track has not only been redesigned but has been resurfaced with Polytan, a rubber surface which is similar to that used on the London 2012 Olympic track. It has also been re-marked.

A hi-tech control room is also being constructed to monitor the feeds from 11 CCTV cameras around the stadium and visitors will be greeted by a new reception area and entrance.

Dean Smith will be taking part in the first Total Football Show at the National Sports Centre in Lilleshall next month.

The Saddlers' boss will be in the show's seminar programme where he'll talk about life in League One in front of a live audience of football professionals and supporters.

The programme is just one part of a full schedule of events over a three-day period and other speakers include, Wolves Legend Steve Bull, former Birmingham, Aston Villa and West Bromwich Albion striker, Kevin Phillips and ex-referee Keith Hackett.

Dean has been recruited by his old boss at Sheffield Wednesday, Chris Turner, who is now Director of Football for the Total Football Show and his involvement means he will also be able to watch Walsall's Centre of Excellence youngsters in action at Lilleshall.

Grassroots

The event includes knockout tournaments for professional teams at under-16 level as well as grassroots teams from across the country.

"The Total Football Show promises to be a great event for anyone involved in the game at any level," Smith told Walsall's official website.

"I'm looking forward to meeting fans as well as professionals from all areas of the industry and to being part of a programme that will discuss many of the game's key issues."

"I know Chris from our days together at Sheffield Wednesday and together with him and the likes of Steve Bull, Kevin Phillips and Gary Speed, there'll be some great discussion in the build up to the new season."

The show also includes a full football exhibition displaying the latest in football products and technology and the chance to view and possibly take part in coaching sessions with the Wales Manager, Gary Speed, Kevin Phillips, Steve Bull and another ex-Wolves striker Ade Akinbiyi.

Under-16s to showcase their talents

The Saddlers are among a strong, eight-team line-up contesting the first Academy Tournament at the Total Football Show at the National Sports Centre in Lilleshall.

The club's under-16 Centre of Excellence team will compete against sides representing Premier League clubs, Stoke City, Wolves and Newcastle Utd as well as Championship teams, Middlesbrough, Reading and Coventry City and League One play-off winners Peterborough Utd.

The tournament will be played over the Saturday and Sunday of the show which begins on Friday, July 8 and will run alongside a Grassroots Tournament involving junior teams from across the country.

"Walsall are part of a great line up deal with and the overall list of clubs taking part shows the confidence football professionals have in our product," Event Director, Terry Moutter told Walsall's official website.

Delighted

"We're absolutely delighted at the quality of the clubs involved. There were several other clubs who wanted to take part as well but were unable to do so, and so we're already looking at the possibility of expanding the Tournament for next year."

The Total Football Show includes opportunities for the football industry and the general public to join forces at the three-day event. Exhibitions, coaching sessions and a full seminar programme will allow fans to interact with stars.

Tickets for any single day of the show are now available at: £7.50 adult; £4 concessions (16 and under and 65 and over); £20 family ticket (x2 adults and up to x3 children 16 and under); Weekend passes for all three days: £12 adult, £6 concession; £32 family (x2 adults and up to x3 children 16 and under). Tickets are available for pre-purchase via the show's official website at

www.totalfootballshow.com.

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